

THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF COUNTERREVOLUTION IN ARGENTINA,
1900-1932

By

SANDRA F. MCGEE

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Sandra F. McGee

To My Parents

This work is an attempt to understand your sufferings, albeit in a very different context.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Council
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Sandra F. McGee

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Students of the Argentine right wing have generally focused on its political ideas and roles in the years since 1930. In this study I trace the origins of counterrevolutionary movements from 1900 to 1932 and explore the social conditions and motivations which led to their formation. Counterrevolution is defined as antagonism to the emancipatory process which found its philosophical expression first in liberalism and then in Marxism; here it does not mean suppression of or opposition to any particular revolution. The membership, views, and activities of the Liga Patriótica Argentina, Liga Republicana, Legión de Mayo, Acción Republicana, and Legión Cívica Argentina are examined, along with La Nueva República and its writers. I classify these groups according to their members' social status and ideas as conservatives, reactionaries, or counterrevolutionaries.

The roots of counterrevolution lay in the tensions associated with the rapid economic growth of the period 1880 to 1914. Development of the export sector, immigration, urbanization, and industrialization greatly altered the social structure, creating the conditions for labor unrest and mass politics. Members of the political class responded to a perceived radical threat by repressing the labor movement, organizing yellow unions, restricting immigration, and wooing labor away from leftism. The social Catholic movement encouraged class conciliation by bringing workers and entrepreneurs together in the same organizations and establishing confessional unions and social projects. Social Catholics and other conservative reformers joined Socialists in advocating social legislation and mutualism. A conservative ideology which encompassed economic nationalism, hostility toward immigrants and workers, traditional anti-Semitism, and support for social measures gained adherents before 1919.

These elements of counterrevolutionary thought and action coalesced in the Liga Patriótica Argentina, founded in 1919. Vigilante squads and military officers who had repressed workers in the Semana Trágica formed the Liga's core. In 1922 the Liga boasted 1500 brigades throughout Argentina and a cohesive organizational structure. Brigade members were largely recruited from the middle sectors and national leaders from the upper class. From 1919 to 1921 the Liga mainly suppressed union activities; afterwards it established social welfare programs, which female liguistas helped administer. With these programs

the Liga hoped to convince workers that class struggle was unnecessary. Manuel Carlés, the Liga's longtime president, and other members also discussed broader means of class conciliation.

The social backgrounds and views of liguistas characterize them as conservatives, primarily concerned with maintaining the status quo. In contrast, the right-wing groups active in the Revolution of 1930, or nationalists, as they called themselves, exhibited both reactionary and counterrevolutionary traits. Except for the Legión de Mayo and Legion Cívica Argentina, these groups were small and elitist. Nationalists tended to be young members of interrelated landholding families which had been prominent in the past and at least had retained social prestige. Displaced from decisionmaking roles by the Radical party, they constituted a defunctionalized segment of the political class. Counterrevolutionaries have usually come from such groups doomed by economic and political modernization. Like European counterrevolutionaries, nationalists desired sweeping change and activism, and some were ideological anti-Semites. By the early 1930's some nationalist intellectuals demanded the end of foreign economic domination. In their militant Catholicism, ties to the land, the unwillingness to form a popular base, however, nationalists also resembled reactionaries. Like reactionaries elsewhere, they hoped to re-establish a rigidly hierarchical society buttressed by the Church, local communities, landed estates, and corporatist groups.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most distinctive features of twentieth-century Argentina, viewed in its Latin American context, has been the prominence of the right wing. The revolution of 1930 transformed its government from that of a liberal republic to a corporatist-leaning dictatorship. The conservative and antidemocratic regimes of the 1930's, military and Peronist rule in the 1940's, and the activities of fervent nationalists from these decades to the present have demonstrated the weakness of liberalism and leftism and the ascendancy of the right. Right-wing extremism in Latin America is not peculiar to Argentina; one may cite the Brazilian integralistas, the Mexican cristeros and sinarquistas, and the National Socialist party of Chile, among others. In general, however, such movements have enjoyed periods of importance and then have faded from view, whereas the Argentine right, although rarely large in number, has managed to exert influence on leading intellectuals, politicians, military officers, and priests for over sixty years. Also noteworthy is the fact that the Argentine right has appropriated the term "nationalism" to refer to its ideas and membership. Nationalism has been a significant factor in the political evolution of many Latin American countries, and yet it has been predominantly leftist-oriented in some of these settings, in contrast to its best-known manifestations in Argentina.¹

A major element in contemporary Argentine history, the right wing clearly merits extensive study. The literature dealing with this topic has focused on the years since 1930,² but the roots of the movement can be traced back to the turn of the century. On the whole, scholars have emphasized the political ideas and roles of the right wing, without devoting much attention to the social conditions and motivations which led to its formation.³ The following work represents an attempt to fill these gaps. I will explore the origins of the right from a social perspective, concentrating on the years 1900 to 1932. By examining such important nuclei of right-wing activity as the Liga Patriótica Argentina, Liga Republicana, Legión de Mayo, Acción Republicana, Legión Cívica Argentina, and La Nueva Repùblica and its writers, as well as individuals who had previously expressed similar concerns, I hope to answer the following questions: What circumstances promoted the rise of these groups? What were their members' views on social problems? Who joined these groups, and for what reasons did they do so? Finally, can one classify these groups in a precise and systematic manner according to their members' social status and ideas?

My interest in classification has led me to attach some importance to terminology. For a number of years, I believe that "right wing," "nationalism," and "fascism," although widely used, are not the best terms that one can find to describe the phenomena under consideration. All three are broad and vague, and they obscure the differences of outlook and social background which existed between the groups being

studied. According to José Luis Romero, for example, the right wing includes those persons united by resistance to change, although they are not necessarily conservative. He notes that one can designate a person or movement as right wing using either of two criteria: political or socioeconomic views. The political right favors the establishment of an authoritarian and hierarchical society and opposes the conceptions of natural rights and liberties which revolutionaries have advanced since the seventeenth century. The socioeconomic right defends the status quo against possible revolutionary threats. In the twentieth century, however, the political right has accepted the idea of change, in the form of social justice and anti-imperialism, and has incorporated it into the traditional system.⁴

Romero encountered difficulties when he attempted to explain this synthesis, which was represented by populism. Noting that populism defended the interests of the masses under elite auspices, he concluded that it was "politically right" and "socioeconomically left."⁵ This statement contradicted the earlier one on the political right's cooptation of potentially radical ideas such as economic independence. Furthermore, Romero did not demonstrate that populist paternalism genuinely threatened the class hierarchy. Since it did not facilitate the socalization of the means of production, populism cannot be considered "socioeconomically left." Romero's problem in defining populism demonstrates the vagueness of his view of the right.

The term "nationalism" is also deficient. As I have mentioned, the persons under study called themselves by this title; their

definitions of nationalism are found throughout this text. A present-day adherent to this doctrine, Enrique Zuleta Alvarez, defined it as

the defense of order, hierarchy, authority and Catholic tradition united . . . to the affirmation . . . of the national personality.

The essential trait of nationalism, according to Zuleta Alvarez, is that it seeks to preserve lo nacional in the economic, cultural, and political spheres; it opposes all forms of internationalism, from Marxism to foreign business interests. Zuleta Alvarez further qualified his nationalism as being right wing, suggesting that this was the only possible kind.⁶ One might ask, however, exactly how one defines the "national personality." Are order and hierarchy typically national traits? Have all self-styled nationalists resolutely opposed foreign capitalism and foreign ties? As this work will show, the types of Argentine nationalism were determined by social preoccupations. The terms to be used in referring to the persons under study should be more indicative of these preoccupations than "nationalism."

In this regard, Eugen Weber's terms are useful.⁷ He borrowed the concepts of the "party of order" and the "party of movement" from August Comte: the former opposing radical social change or class conflict, and the latter advocating precisely such steps. The word "order" pinpoints these persons' key concern, in contrast to the broader "right wing" or "nationalism." The use of the word "party" is also apt; it implies the existence of an alliance of different groups, rather than an undifferentiated whole.

In my opinion, the term which best describes the movements under study is counterrevolution, whose meaning is evident in the word itself.⁸ The roots of counterrevolution can be traced back to the aristocratic opposition to the French Revolution and its guiding principles of rationalism, liberalism, and human equality, principles which also inspired leading figures of the May Revolution of 1810 in Buenos Aires. As liberalism shed its progressive character after the mid-nineteenth century, counterrevolutionary activity became increasingly directed against the danger of a proletarian revolution inspired by Marxism, other forms of socialism, or by anarchism. The counterrevolutionary ranks were strengthened by the addition of members of the liberal bourgeoisie and landowning peasants, anxious to defend their property and status against the threat from below. As time passed members of the lower middle class and other groups which had not experienced any benefits from industrialization also joined the forces of counterrevolution.

Counterrevolution does not necessarily mean the suppression of a specific revolution, nor must a counterrevolutionary movement be immediately preceded by a revolution. National Socialism, the quintessential counterrevolutionary party, came to power in Germany not at the point of acute revolutionary crisis in 1919 but fourteen years later. Similarly, Mussolini's March on Rome took place in 1922, after the postwar revolutionary threat had been quelled. Instead of saying that counterrevolution follows revolution, one might posit that

the same economic and social problems that cause revolutions can just as easily cause counterrevolutions.⁹ The problems which gave rise to counterrevolution in Argentina will receive much attention in the following pages.

Counterrevolution signifies antagonism to the emancipatory process which found its philosophical expression first in liberalism and then in Marxism. Here it is perhaps useful to recall Ernst Nolte's characterization of fascism as "resistance to transcendence."¹⁰ The meaning which he assigned to fascism is the same as the one I attach to counterrevolution; he viewed fascism as a broad phenomenon, while I see it as one of the components of counterrevolution, as I will explain below. According to Nolte, the desire for freedom from the confines of class, religion, ethnicity, locality, nation, and so on has formed a major theme in the history of western civilization. The triumph of the liberal bourgeoisie (and industrialization) resulted in the elimination of many of these ties, a step toward what Nolte called "practical transcendence." Some limitations on human freedom still remained in bourgeois society, however, such as class exploitation and division of labor; Marxists hoped to destroy these shackles.

Counterrevolutionaries fear the dissolution of traditional allegiances and hierarchies — the universality of modern life — and thus oppose practical transcendence. They also resist "theoretical transcendence," which Nolte described as surpassing the bounds of concrete reality through abstract and universalist thought. Theoretical

transcendence includes the belief that life should conform to certain ideals and that it can be restructured to do so. In contrast, counter-revolutionaries insist on "seeing the world as it is" and not judging it by "outside" criteria. They consider both forms of transcendence unnatural and foreign: unnatural, because particularist ties are, in their view, essential for the maintenance of order; and foreign, because the criteria do not emerge directly out of local experience. Their vision of "reality," however, is just as much an abstraction as is leftist utopia.

The movements that will be described here will be called counter-revolutionary, although occasionally to avoid repetition I will employ the terms right wing and party of order. Only the counterrevolutionary groups of the late 1920's and early 1930's will be called nationalist, in order to distinguish them from their predecessor, the Liga Patriótica Argentina. Significant differences existed between these groups despite their shared orientation. Scholars have noted similar cleavages within European counterrevolutionary movements. For example, George Mosse called attention to the conservative and radical elements within Nazism: on the one hand, its traditionalism, and on the other, its antibourgeois attitudes and its dynamism. He went on to cite the differences between National Socialism and its reactionary allies.¹¹ In an overview of the European right, Eugen Weber found that it had three components: resistance to change, reaction, and radicalism.¹² Similarly, Arno Mayer divided the counterrevolutionary forces into

conservatives, reactionaries, and counterrevolutionaries pure and simple, each defined in terms of class and ideology.¹³ This is the model that will be followed in this study.

In general, conservatives are those who benefit from the existing order and hope to maintain it. Normally they are secure economically, socially, and politically, and their self-confidence is reflected in their political style — subdued, reasonable, accommodating. Their pessimistic view of human nature and of the need for hierarchy in social relations remains implicit except in times of crisis, when their beliefs harden and become ideological. Their usual spirit of compromise vanishes, leaving a willingness to resort to violent means of defending the status quo.¹⁴ Reactionaries are wedded to a pre-existing order — and often to the land or the Church — and are dedicated to reviving it. They hope to take advantage of social crisis in order to restore the institutions of the ancien régime and reinforce their own positions in society, which have been undermined by modernization. Normally they despise conservatives, who profit from and defend the status quo, as well as counterrevolutionaries, who issue demagogic appeals to the masses. Indeed, reactionaries would prefer to take the masses out of the political arena. To secure their goals and prevent revolutionary change, however, they will join the other two groups.¹⁵

Counterrevolutionaries — the archtypical fascists — usually draw adherents from poor landholders, the lower and new middle classes, and from "job-, income-, and status-seeking degree holders"; other groups,

however, also are sources of recruits. Even in normal times they are insecure and fearful of change, and in crisis situations leaders can easily manipulate

their resentment of those above them, their fear of those below them, and their estrangement from the real world about them.¹⁶

As their name suggests, counterrevolutionaries provide the main impetus toward counterrevolution. Without cooperation from conservatives and reactionaries, however, counterrevolutionaries cannot achieve their goals. Only certain conditions impel the three groups to unite and foment counterrevolution.

Mayer's typology presents some ambiguities. He used the same term to refer to both the movement as a whole and to one component of this movement. At first glance this appears to be a weakness in his model, but it is actually a strength. When social and economic problems are sufficiently grave, and when revolution seems to threaten the status quo, otherwise staid conservatives and reactionaries join with counterrevolutionaries and assume the same extreme and violent posture which normally characterizes only the latter. In other words, in crisis situations the differences between the three groups disappear. One might also ask whether one would expect to find all three groups within a particular counterrevolutionary organization, or whether the organization would represent one orientation and its outside allies the others. For example, in the case of the Nazis, did the party

itself include conservatives, reactionaries, and counterrevolutionaries, or did it exemplify counterrevolution, while its supporters in business, politics, the rural sector, and the military stood for conservatism and reaction? The answer is both. In the following pages I shall mainly delineate the basic orientation of the groups under study, although I shall also indicate the differences and similarities between them, and between them and their outside allies (and antagonists). I will show, for instance, that the Liga Patriótica Argentina was fundamentally a conservative organization and as such was tied to a wider heritage of conservative opinion and action. The later groups manifested reactionary and counterrevolutionary tendencies and can be distinguished from the Liga and other conservative allies.

Students of European counterrevolutionary movements will note the similarities between them and the groups which form the subject of this work. Constraints of time and space prevent me from devoting much attention to these resemblances, although at various points I will explicitly compare Argentine organizations with European ones. Also, the fact that I am using terms derived from the European context is in itself an implicit comparison. In the future I hope to remedy this deficiency.

Some readers may object to any comparison with Europe, claiming that the economic and social conditions there which produced fascism varied markedly from those in the dependent economies of Latin America.¹⁷ This objection, in my opinion, is unwarranted. It has

frequently been observed that nineteenth-century Latin American liberalism was false and artificial, since its standard bearers did not fill the role of a true national bourgeoisie; its policies promoted dependence rather than autonomous economic development, in contrast to the European case. Even if the objective conditions which produced liberalism in Latin America differed from those in Europe, no one refuses to call Latin Americans of this political orientation liberals. Why, then, the reluctance to compare Latin America counterrevolutionary movements to European ones and to use the word fascism?

Furthermore, Europe is not an homogeneous area; parts of it are as underdeveloped as much of Latin America. Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Spain in the interwar period were poor agrarian economies, and yet all of them had important fascist movements. The Nazi party's birthplace was Bavaria, one of the least industrialized areas of Germany. Even where the objective conditions differed greatly from those in Latin America, the subjective conditions may have been similar. Germans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries — Nazis and their predecessors — complained about the power of British capitalism and how it held back native efforts, despite the fact that Germany had by this time become a great industrial power.¹⁸ A thorough comparison of European and Latin American counterrevolutionary movements and settings is needed. This work is one preliminary attempt at such a study, focusing on one particular Latin American country.

Notes

1

Charles W. Bergquist contrasted leftist and rightist nationalism in "Exports and Nationalism in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay: A Research Proposal Submitted to the Social Science Research Council," n.p., n.d. (Photocopy.)

2

This is true of the following works on the right wing: Ronald Dolkart, "Manuel A. Fresco, Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, 1936-1940: A Study of the Argentine Right and Its Responses to Economic and Social Change" (Ph.D. dissertation, U.C.L.A., 1969); Mark Falcoff, "Argentine Nationalism on the Eve of Perón: The Force of Radical Orientation of Young Argentina and Its Rivals, 1935-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Univ., 1970); Marvin Goldwert, "The Argentine Revolution of 1930: The Rise of Modern Militarism and Ultra Nationalism in Argentina" (Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Texas, 1962); Juan José Hernández Arregui, La formación de la conciencia nacional (1930-1960) (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1970); David Crichton Jordan, "Argentina's Nationalist Movements and the Political Parties (1930-1963): A Study of Conflict" (Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1964); Marysa Navarro Gerassi, Los nacionalistas, trans. by Alberto Ciria (Buenos Aires, 1968), although this author also deals with the years before 1930. Exceptions to this generalization are Enrique Zuleta Alvarez, El nacionalismo argentino, I (Buenos Aires, 1975); Carl Solberg, Immigration and Nationalism: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914 (Austin, 1970); David Rock, Politics in Argentina, 1890-1930: The Rise and Fall of Radicalism (London, 1975), in his discussion of the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

3

The only exceptions are Dolkart, "Manuel A. Fresco," and Rock, who pays some attention to the backgrounds of leading members of the Liga Patriótica Argentina in Politics in Argentina.

4

José Luis Romero, El pensamiento político de la derecha latinoamericana (Buenos Aires, 1970), pp. 16, 27, and 33.

5

Ibid, p. 146; also see pp. 145 and 177.

6

Zuleta Alvarez, El nacionalismo argentino, I, p. 45.

7

Eugen Weber, Varieties of Fascism (Princeton, 1964), pp. 23-24.

8

This is the term used by Arno J. Mayer in Dynamics of Counter-revolution in Europe, 1870-1956. An Analytic Framework (New York, 1971).

9

Ibid, p. 46.

10

Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism: Action Francaise, Italian Fascism, National Socialism, trans. by Leila Vennewitz (New York, 1966), especially pp. 537-567. A further discussion of this theme may be found in Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution. Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory (Rev. ed.; Boston, 1960), pp. 3-29.

11

George L. Mosse, "The Genesis of Fascism," Journal of Contemporary History, I (1966), pp. 14-26.

12

Eugen Weber, "The Right: An Introduction," in The European Right: A Historical Profile, ed. by Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (Berkeley, 1965), pp. 15-16.

13

Mayer introduced these terms in Dynamics of Counterrevolution, p. 39.

14

Ibid, pp. 49-55.

15

Ibid, pp. 48-49.

16

Ibid, pp. 60-61.

17

For such an objection see Alistair Hennessy, "Fascism and Populism in Latin America," in Fascism, A Reader's Guide. Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography, ed. by Walter Laqueur (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 260-261.

18

The classic discussion of this point is found in Helmuth Plessner, Die verspätete Nation. Über die politische Verführbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes (Stuttgart, 1959).

CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND TO COUNTERREVOLUTION:
ARGENTINE SOCIETY AND POLITICS BEFORE 1916

In January 1919 a general strike broke out in Buenos Aires, followed by a week of mass demonstrations, labor violence, and vigilante action against workers. The impact of the Semana Trágica, as these disturbances came to be known, was great; many Argentines believed that a Bolshevik-style revolution had nearly taken place and that the danger had not yet receded. To counter this threat, the first anti-leftist and antilabor group to organize itself on a permanent basis throughout Argentina arose — the Liga Patriótica Argentina. However, this counterrevolutionary movement did not merely spring up overnight in response to the events of January 1919. Although the economic dislocations of the war precipitated its explosive appearance in Argentine political life, the roots of counterrevolution lay in the tensions associated with the rapid socioeconomic development of the past forty years. In order to understand the origins of the twentieth-century Argentine right wing, one must look first at the evolution of that nation's economy, society, and polity before World War I and then at various manifestations of dissatisfaction with the path of change.

From 1880 to 1914 Argentina experienced a period of growth unprecedented in its history and, indeed, in the modern history of most other nations as well. Presiding over this dynamic era of mass immigration,

development of the export sector, urbanization, and the initial stages of industrialization was a group which historians have alternately styled the unicato, the "elite," or the "oligarchy" and have characterized as liberal or liberal-conservative. It is not always clear from the context what the terms elite, oligarchy, and unicato mean: whether they denote all of the various groups which competed for political leadership and effectively exerted influence on decision-makers, or only those persons who actually occupied formal and informal leadership positions at any given moment. Here the former will be referred to as the political class and the latter as the political elite.¹ Within the political class, rival factions hoping to expel the political elite from power and take its place might also exist. As in any context, the political class and the political elite operated within a political system defined by laws and customs.

Two factors in the Argentine case tend to confuse the distinctions between these terms. The first is that up to 1912 the political class was practically synonymous with the entire political system; that is, members of the political class were almost the only participants in the political process. The second is that the political elite attempted to rid itself of potential rivals from within the political class through cooptation as well as by repression. These factors will receive more attention later on in this chapter.

Who belonged to the political class? The main political actors in any geographical or historical context usually include individuals

from the highest strata of wealth and social status, and certainly the Argentine political class was no exception. But the latter did not coincide completely with the upper class (or, at least, a strictly defined upper class), although it certainly recruited heavily from it. Perhaps it is more useful to conceptualize the relation between the upper class and the political class as that of two greatly overlapping circles, with most but not all of their areas held in common. The boundaries between the circles were fluid; members of the political class often crossed over into the upper class and vice versa. For example, many persons acquired land — and, consequently, upper-class status — that had been wrested from the Indians during the Conquest of the Desert (1879-80) through their ties to President Julio A. Roca (1880-86, 1898-1904) and his political comrades. It was also possible for the descendants of a politician who had become wealthy and socially prominent to leave politics behind them, or for the offspring of an upper-class, politically active family to lose their fortune yet remain in public life.²

The political class included not only prestigious estancieros of the littoral region but businessmen, financiers, professionals, and military officers, many of whom may also have been estancieros; younger sons of landowning families; and other persons, sometimes recent immigrants, united to these families by bonds of marriage, kinship, or friendship. Scions of families which possessed little wealth but had resided in Argentina since the colonial or early

independence periods also were political actors, as were well-educated men who did not fit in any of the categories mentioned above. Not all of these belonged to the upper class, but their political connections facilitated entry into it, as already described. In summary, such terms as elite and oligarchy are inadequate because of their static and exclusivist connotations; a larger, more varied group of people constituted the Argentine political class than they seem to suggest.³

It might appear that the political elite was synonymous with the wealthiest and most prestigious estancieros, since it served as their mouthpiece. But a simple glance at the list of Argentine presidents and cabinet members in this period will reveal the names of many who neither came from the littoral provinces nor originally numbered among that area's most important landholders. Again, political prominence often antedated landownership. A more accurate way of defining the political elite than by narrow economic interest may be to list certain criteria for membership and trace the connections between them. The political elite included

the president and his associates, the provincial governors and their supporters, the national representatives who obeyed the behests of the executive, whether national or local, and the economic interests, mainly landowners, which allied themselves with these men.⁴

The general pattern of rule was that certain prominent families

controlled provincial governments and solidified ties with the leading families of other provinces through friendship, coparentage, and marriage. Members of these families represented their provinces in Congress and used it as an arena to cultivate these connections. These kinship networks thus extended upward to the national administration, creating what one author has called gobiernos de familia, in which the selection of the president and vice-president and control of government depended on relationships forged between the families of various provinces.⁵

An important characteristic of the political elite and most of the political class was their liberalism, or as some historians have put it, their conservative liberalism.⁶ Within these groups there was a broad consensus on the desirability of an export economy and of a classical liberal program. Support of liberal principles, however, ranged from mere lip service to unequivocal enthusiasm, and a significant minority resisted the official creed — namely, the Catholic spokesmen. But even the latter considered themselves part of a worldwide Catholic movement charged with providing moral leadership for liberal democracies. The antiliberal stance of Catholic statesmen such as José Manuel Estrada and Pedro Goyena was limited primarily to their opposition to curtailing Church influence on education and the family and to the "sensual," utilitarian, and materialistic view of life which they believed that liberalism epitomized.⁷ Successful in their campaign against divorce, the Catholics did not fare as well

against secular primary education, which became law in 1884, the civil register (1884), and civil marriage (1888). They also manifested their discontent in the Revolution of 1890, as will be seen below.

The materialistic conception of life which the Catholics deplored also predominated. The aim of liberal idealogues, known as the Generation of Eighty, was ruthlessly secular and rationalist: to transform backward, disunited Argentina into a prosperous, centralized modern nation. Their government program was summed up in President Roca's motto of "Peace and Administration." Peace meant the repression of civil strife, the elimination or cooptation of opposing political factions, and the consolidation of the nation under a central authority. Administration signified establishing a limited participatory democracy and an economic development model inspired by classical liberal precepts. The term administration also implied a note of cautious optimism, characteristic of the positivism which flavored Argentine liberalism: the belief that problems faced by society were more or less specific to Argentina and were susceptible to a pragmatic, problem-solving approach. This anti-universalist viewpoint diverged from that of the Catholics, who were more inclined to see problems in terms of moral issues and had less faith in temporal solutions. It also contrasted with that of the fledgling labor movement, whose spokesmen refused to reduce the class struggle to the level of a mere administrative dilemma peculiar to Argentina and emphasized their ties with the international proletariat. The conflict between the workers'

outlook and that of the liberals assumed more significance in the early twentieth century, although the political class's distrust of the lower classes had manifested itself long before then.

Perhaps the attitude of the political class was best expressed not by Roca's motto but by the positivist one of "Order and Progress": order for the masses and progress for those fortunate individuals who could successfully compete in a free-market economy. Although it was skeptical of the masses' ability for self-government, the political elite believed that its policies would lay the groundwork for true democracy at some time in the future. (The exact date was never specified.) Meanwhile, it concluded that rule by an enlightened minority was necessary until the masses were sufficiently "prepared" to enter the political system. In Argentina from 1880 to 1912, the traditional liberal emphasis on liberty mainly translated into liberty for the political class. In addition, the political elite became so convinced of its social and cultural superiority and its right to rule that it would not relinquish its power even to rival factions from within the political class. The fact that the political elite tried to perpetuate itself in power is the reason why some scholars characterize its ideology as liberal-conservative rather than simply liberal;⁸ another (and better) reason is that with the passage of time, its classical liberalism became outmoded.

The Argentine political elite was not necessarily hypocritical, nor was it exclusively concerned with advancing and safeguarding its

power. The Generation of Eighty genuinely believed that its positivist liberalism was the ideology best suited for tackling national problems. Whether its members were correct is debatable, but the fact that similar strains of liberalism characterized other regimes throughout Latin America and Europe at this time probably reinforced their assessment.⁹ Outside the North American, the French after 1871, and the English after 1884-85, most contemporary liberal governments were no more democratic than the Argentine, at least in the sense of permitting mass political participation.¹⁰ The economic model provided by liberalism — a free-market economy emphasizing agricultural development, open to foreign trade and investment — was widely considered the most suitable for developing nations. Therefore it is not surprising that Argentines found it attractive. The results of liberal economic policies seemed to justify this belief, for the benefits of an open-door, agricultural export economy were many. It attracted foreign investment, new technology, and workers; it enlarged the internal market; it provided employment opportunities for the lower classes and ample revenues for the upper. The disadvantages of an export-oriented economy — lack of diversification, dependence on world market conditions beyond Argentine control, high foreign debts, regional imbalances — were present, but they were not yet apparent to most Argentines.¹¹

Many members of the political class found it financially rewarding to support the liberal economic model. Whether or not that class

consisted exclusively of groups dependent on the export of agricultural goods and related activities, it is unquestionable that government policies from 1880 to 1914 and concurrent events benefitted such groups enormously. One of these policies was that of stimulating immigration. Argentine liberals from Rivadavia to the Generation of Eighty had recognized that development of the agricultural and pastoral industries and the establishment of a modern republic required a substantial influx of laborers. According to many liberals, fulfillment of their ideals depended not only upon a quantitative but a "qualitative" change in the population; they deemed that its improvement through "Europeanization" was essential in order to achieve stability and progress.¹²

Legislation designed to promote immigration, to set up agricultural colonies, and to distribute land to newcomers, combined with the economic prospects available in a rapidly developing area, attracted millions of foreigners who were eager to share in the nation's growing prosperity. From 1870 to 1910 about 2,200,000 immigrants settled permanently. The foreign-born constituted about 26 percent of the national populace in 1895, 30 percent in 1914, and 15 percent as late as 1947. The figure recorded in 1914, during the peak period of immigration, represented a higher proportion of immigrants to total population than that of any other major country, including the United States.¹³

From the late nineteenth century until well into the twentieth, the great majority of the foreign-born was male and between the ages of

fifteen and sixty-four. Immigrants were found not only in the countryside, where they served as farmers, agricultural laborers, ranch hands, and builders of the railroad lines, but in the cities, where they were employed in retail trades, service occupations, infant industries, transportation, and construction. About 60 percent of the blue- and white-collar workers in the federal capital in 1914 were foreign-born, as were 86 percent of the unskilled manual laborers.¹⁴

The heaviest wave of immigration coincided with the great period of urbanization; between 1895 and 1914 the city of Buenos Aires grew from 663,200 to 1,575,800 inhabitants. In 1895 52 percent of the population of the federal capital was foreign, declining to a still considerable 33 percent in 1914. Immigrants accounted for at least one-half of the littoral provinces' inhabitants during much of the same period. Thus for many years a high proportion of the economically active population in Argentina's industrial and political center was foreign. These figures alone, which do not take into account the children of immigrants, underline the impact of immigration upon the national economy and society.¹⁵

Other factors besides immigration fueled Argentine development. Included among these were the increased availability of land for livestock raising and agriculture resulting from the conquest of the Indians and the expansion of the railroad network, the decline in transportation costs from Argentina to Europe and within Argentina, heavy investment in infrastructure, improvements in the technology of

food production, processing, and shipping, and the establishment of flexible exchange rates. Finally, rising external demand for food-stuffs served as further impetus to economic growth.

In the half century before World War I, Argentina became one of the wealthiest countries in the world, roughly on a par with the United States, Western Europe, Canada, and Australia. It was the greatest showcase of the liberal economic model in Latin America. Population rose from 1,737,000 in 1869 to 7,885,200 in 1914. One economist estimates that during this period real gross domestic product grew at a rate of about 5 percent a year. Other indicators of economic growth demonstrated impressive gains as well. The railroad network expanded from 604 kilometers in 1869 to 34,534 in 1914, the area sown with crops from 580,000 hectares in 1872 to 20,620,000 in 1914, and the value of merchandise exports from 29,600,000 gold pesos in 1869 to 431,100,000 in 1914.¹⁶ Little data on personal income is available for these years. Judging by the opulent consumption habits of the porteño upper class around the turn of the century however, landowners and other similarly privileged groups reaped enormous profits.

If economic development brought prosperity to much of the political class, it also brought great and unanticipated alterations in the social structure. The changes produced by immigration, urbanization, and industrialization transcended the envisioned Europeanization of the populace. The Generation of Eighty and other proponents of immigration had assumed that foreigners would settle in the countryside and become

small farmers and rural laborers. However, due to the difficulty in securing land on favorable terms and to the economic opportunities available in the growing cities, immigrants tended to establish themselves in urban areas and came to dominate whole sectors of the urban economy. In 1895 81 percent of all industrialists were foreign-born; the percentage declined only to 66 by 1914. The corresponding figures for owners of commercial establishments were 74 percent both in 1895 and 1914; for workers and employees in nonindustrial businesses, 57 percent in 1895 and 53 percent in 1914; for industrial workers and employees, 60 percent and 50 percent, respectively; and for the liberal professions, 53 percent and 45 percent. In general, a three-tiered society replaced the traditional social configuration of a small urban middle class sandwiched between upper class landowners, professionals, and bureaucrats and a large rural lower class. Foreign-born white-collar workers, businessmen, craftsmen, and industrialists now composed the majority of the middle class and foreign-born manual laborers the majority of the urban lower.¹⁷

Members of the political class viewed these demographic and social changes with anxiety. Before their eyes the old familiar culture, language, and social structure were giving way to a new and often bewildering mix of peoples, dialects, and customs. A quiet aldea in 1869, Buenos Aires in 1914 was a bustling, cosmopolitan center of industry, commerce, and bureaucracy. In it one could find all the attendant evils of a large modern city: congestion, inadequate housing

and public services, noise, pollution, crime, extremes of wealth and poverty, corrupt machine politics, and widespread discontent and despair.¹⁸ These unfavorable conditions aroused concern among individuals of all class backgrounds. Proponents of left-wing ideologies blamed capitalism for these problems and saw the creation of a classless society as the eventual solution. Members of the political class formulated a different theory of causation. They tended to identify the ills of twentieth-century urban civilization, in all their complexity, with the presence of foreigners on Argentine soil. They viewed immigrant economic strength, immigrant labor radicalism, and potential immigrant electoral influence as challenges to their socioeconomic and political supremacy. The political class reacted to this perceived threat by repressing immigrants politically, excluding them socially, and criticizing them for their alleged cultural inferiority and separatism.

Political repression included a variety of activities, one of which was clamping down on labor radicalism. The labor movement will be discussed in some detail, as attempts to suppress it form a major theme of counterrevolutionary action after 1919. Although wages in the period before World War I often were relatively high in comparison with Europe, the working and living conditions of laborers and their families left great room for improvement. The high costs of shelter, clothing, and food often cancelled out the wage differential between Argentina and Europe. Currency depreciation in the late nineteenth

century benefitted the exporters and the speculators, but the workers who received fixed wages suffered badly. The wage scale varied markedly throughout the decades which preceded World War I, but even in the best of times employment was often of a temporary nature, particularly in construction and on the docks, and many workers could only count on working 200 days a year.¹⁹

In order to ameliorate these conditions and to assert control over their own lives, workers had participated in the labor movement since the mid-nineteenth century.²⁰ The first labor union, the Sociedad Tipográfica Bonaerense, was founded in 1857. As the urban population of Argentina grew with the addition of immigrants, so too did the proletariat and the labor movement. During the 1870's and early 1880's, foreign laborers who had brought anarchist and socialist ideas with them from Europe established affiliates of the First Workers International in Buenos Aires and Córdoba. A group of Spanish-speaking workers founded the Centro Socialista Obrero in 1894, which in the same year began to publish the important newspaper La Vanguardia, under the editorship of Juan B. Justo. Justo became a leader of the Partido Socialist Obrero Internacional, which was born about this time and eventually was known simply as the Partido Socialista.

The party held its first campaign for public office in 1896 in the federal capital and by 1904 it managed to attract enough votes to send its candidate, Alfredo L. Palacios, to the Chamber of Deputies.

Meanwhile Socialists tried to establish their own labor federations. When this proved unsuccessful, they turned to a joint venture with the anarchists in the Federación Obrera Argentina (F.O.A.), founded in 1901. Squabbling erupted between the two groups, and the Socialists walked out of F.O.A. to set up yet another federation, the Unión General de Trabajadores (U.G.T.), in 1903. However, they gradually lost support in the U.G.T. to the syndicalists and in the labor unions in general to the latter and the anarchists. Still, the Socialists continued to exert great influence over the working classes through social projects such as consumers' cooperatives, workers' libraries and schools, mutual aid societies, and the Hogar Obrero, which built inexpensive housing for workers and gave them low mortgage rates; through La Vanguardia, which was disseminated throughout the nation; through aiding strikers; and through political activity. The passage of the Sáenz Peña law in 1912, which guaranteed universal and secret male suffrage, enabled the Socialists to elect party members to both houses of Congress and to become a major social and political force in the city of Buenos Aires and other littoral urban centers.

The Socialists did not accomplish these feats effortlessly. They struggled against various obstacles, among them lack of funds, a low naturalization rate (which kept their natural constituency small), and official disfavor. From time to time the government prohibited the sale of La Vanguardia and other party organs, disrupted Socialists meetings, imprisoned and deported party leaders, passed punitive laws,

and perpetrated electoral fraud. The level of repression declined, however, as the party became more reformist in nature.

Initially the party doctrine reflected some revolutionary aspirations, such as nationalizing the means of production, including land, and creating a direct democracy. Justo and other Socialist leaders were familiar with the works of Karl Marx and other European revolutionary thinkers; indeed, Justo translated Das Kapital for the first time into Spanish. Other goals were also present from the beginning: to improve living and working conditions through such measures as the eight-hour work day for adults, regulation of female and child labor, the minimum wage, income and inheritance taxes instead of indirect taxes, and low food prices. The Socialists hoped to democratize Argentine public life through universal suffrage, the initiative, referendum, and recall, facilitating the naturalization of foreigners, women's rights, and the representation of minorities in parliament. They also aimed to carry out the full liberal program by abolishing the death penalty and the standing army and by separating Church and State. Finally, they hoped to attain these goals through public campaigns and parliamentary activity. The tactic of struggling within the system to fulfill an evolutionary program soon took precedence over long-term revolutionary means and ends. Furthermore, Marxism never constituted the only ideological influence — or even the most important one — on the Socialists; liberalism, positivism, and the democratic socialism of the French socialist parliamentarian

Jean Jaurès and the German Marxist revisionist Eduard Bernstein exerted far more sway.

In examining the ideology and practice of the Socialist party, it is necessary to keep in mind the social composition of its activists and followers. Its leaders tended to be well-educated professionals of nonproletarian background; Juan B. Justo and Enrique Dickmann were doctors, José Ingenieros was a psychologist and sociologist, Alfredo L. Palacios was a lawyer. Some of these, however, did come from relatively impoverished homes, such as Dickmann, a Russian-Jewish immigrant and former rural laborer in a Jewish agricultural colony in Entre Ríos. Some commentators have used these facts to account for the Socialists' moderate stance. Still, the top Argentine Socialists had markedly fewer aristocratic antecedents than their counterparts in other political parties.²¹ The party attracted most of its support from the "labor aristocracy" of skilled workers and artisans. Also, the immigrant middle class found its consumerism, its advocacy of clean democratic government, its image of rectitude, and its lack of chauvinism appealing.

As the Socialists became more reformist, government repression was more and more directed against other groups, particularly the anarchists. The influence of anarchist ideas on the working class dated back to at least the mid-1880's, when the famous Italian anarchist, Errico Malatesta, came to Buenos Aires and founded several groups and a newspaper during his four-year stay. Inspired by

Malatesta and other anarchist visitors from abroad, workers formed unions, or sociedades de resistencia, and other social institutions. The sociedades de resistencia joined together with Socialists in the F.O.A., which, after the latter departed, changed its name to the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (F.O.R.A.) in 1904. In its fifth congress, in 1905, F.O.R.A. agreed to adopt the principles of anarchist communism. La Protesta became its organ and, in addition, the most important anarchist newspaper in South America.

Although all Argentine anarchists opposed the state, some of them stressed individualism and others leaned toward collectivism. The former strain of anarchism, influenced by Max Stirner, advocated the complete autonomy of the individual and in its extreme version approached existentialism. Drawing upon the ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Malatesta, among others, the collectivists favored the liberty of the individual but within the context of a small independent group. The society they envisioned would be based on a federation of small communes, permitting the greatest scope possible for individual action and self-realization. Since they believed that their goal was not attainable under the capitalist system, workers would have to strive together through the sociedades de resistencia to destroy this system and attendant authoritarian institutions.

The collectivist tendency won out over the individualist, partly because of Malatesta's influence and partly because the latter tendency did not permit effective organization. As it was, collectivist

anarchism presented many organizational disadvantages: an inherent lack of doctrine and cohesion, a rigid opposition to compromise, an emphasis on violence. No political action was deemed legitimate, since this would entail working within the system and thus perpetuating it. (For this reason, among others, the anarchists saw the Socialists as traitors to the working class.) According to the anarchists, workers would enhance class consciousness and gain valuable experience through direct action — boycotts, sabotage, strikes — and would eventually bring about social revolution through a cataclysmic general strike. With the revolution all fetters would disappear and the federation of communes would spontaneously rise into being.

This vision of a future utopia attracted the majority of organized workers in the period up to 1919. Anarchism gained most of its adherents from the ranks of the Italian, Spanish, French, and Russian day laborers and the unemployed. The provocative actions of the anarchists, such as the attempt on President Manuel Quintana's life in 1905 and the assassination of the police chief of Buenos Aires, Colonel Ramón L. Falcón, in 1909, inevitably succeeded in provoking government repression.

Government repression was also directed against another group of workers — the syndicalists. The syndicalists emerged at the beginning of this century, when they took over some of the unions belonging to the U.G.T. and by 1906 dominated the latter. Under the influence of George Sorel, the syndicalists roughly followed a middle road between

the Socialists and the anarchists. Like the anarchists, the syndicalists hoped to overthrow the existing society through a general strike, which at one blow would deliver the means of production into the workers' hands. Their disdain for a coherent economic and political philosophy and their glorification of action led them to hold Socialists, intellectuals, and parliamentarians in low esteem. They advocated no program beyond that of bringing down the state and erecting in its place a society composed of syndicates — workers organizations which would control production and the distribution of goods and services.

Although their long-term goals were revolutionary, in the short run the syndicalists acted pragmatically within the given order, like the Socialists. Despite their emphasis on direct action, they admitted the possibility of electing candidates to public office and negotiating with businessmen to win limited economic gains. Their lack of ideological baggage and formal partisan ties permitted them to make deals and alliances with political leaders, as they later did with President Hipólito Yrigoyen. As time passed and the percentage of native-born members of the working class grew, the syndicalists captured the allegiance of the majority of unionized laborers. An important feature of the syndicalists' strategy was their interest in promoting worker unity. They aimed at bringing together all workers organizations under one central authority, free of partisan political ties, in order to guarantee harmony of working-class action and purpose.

With this aim in mind, the U.G.T. began to negotiate with F.O.R.A. After one failure, representatives from the two groups and from unaffiliated unions held a congress in 1909, out of which arose a new federation, the Confederación Obrera Regional Argentina (C.O.R.A.). The architects of the new labor federation designed it carefully, allowing as much liberty of action as possible to the constituent unions. However, this was not enough to satisfy the most intransigent anarchists, causing a split within the ranks of F.O.R.A. between those who joined C.O.R.A. and those who remained outside it. In that year, C.O.R.A. members voted to disband their organization and recommended that their affiliate unions join F.O.R.A., which in its ninth congress agreed to welcome them. This unity proved to be transitory, as F.O.R.A. split into two: F.O.R.A. V, which adhered to the anarchist principles declared at the fifth congress, and F.O.R.A. IX, which was named for the ninth congress and eventually became syndicalist.

Workers' attempts to promote class consciousness, wrest economic gains from employers, and prepare for the revolution could not help but alarm the political class, which fought back in a variety of ways. Calling a state of siege and closing down meetings, offices, and newspapers were some of the government's weapons. Since such a high percentage of the urban proletariat and the labor movement was foreign-born, immigration restriction and deportation were others. An immigration restriction bill was first introduced in the Senate in 1899 by Miguel Cané, a leading intellectual of the Generation of Eighty. Such

legislation failed to pass until the outbreak of a large anarchist-led general strike in 1902.²² According to the Residence Law, promulgated that year, the executive branch could deport any foreigner convicted of a crime by a foreign court, or one "whose conduct compromised national security or disturbed public order." The language used was suggestive of future counterrevolutionary rhetoric; labor radicalism was seen as a threat against the nation itself. The law also enabled the government to deny entrance to foreigners likely to fall into these categories.²³

The Residence Law did not prove sufficient to quell the activities of the labor movement. Workers continued their efforts to organize and strike, reaching a height of militancy in 1909 and 1910. It is worthwhile to look at the government and civilian repression of these actions, which formed a significant precedent to the counterrevolutionary occurrences of 1919. On May Day 1909, police fired upon a commemorative parade held by F.O.R.A. in downtown Buenos Aires, leaving over 100 casualties. In response, about 200,000 workers participated in a general strike, supported by the Socialist party, U.G.T., and F.O.R.A., which paralyzed the capital city for nine days and had repercussions throughout the country. The government fought back by closing down worker meeting places, deporting labor leaders under the provisions of the Residence Law, and sending troops into the capital. The so-called Semana Roja ended when the government agreed to some of the strikers' demands, such as reopening union and federal headquarters, but

rejected their main one: firing the hated Colonel Falcón, who had ordered the bloody May Day repression.²⁴

Working-class hostility over the May Day massacre persisted and erupted on November 14, 1909, when a teen-aged Russian anarchist, Simón Radowitzsky, hurled a bomb at Falcón and his secretary, killing them both. The government reacted swiftly by imposing a two-month state of siege, detaining and deporting labor activists, and shutting down union headquarters and the printing presses of leftist newspapers, despite C.O.R.A. and F.O.R.A. insistence that Radowitzsky had acted on his own. The youth branch of the ruling party, the Partido Autonomista Nacional, declared that it would fight against the influence of socially disruptive ideas spread by immigrant groups. Various prominent figures spoke out against the foreign threat and for Argentine unity at Falcón's funeral, including Julio A. Rojas, for the Juventud Autonomista, and the future president of the Liga Patriótica Argentina, Manuel Carlés, for the Chamber of Deputies. Meanwhile, a group of private citizens — perhaps the same Juventud Autonomista — broke into the offices of the anarchist newspaper La Protesta, destroying machinery and closing down the printing press.

Periodic assaults by private individuals on union headquarters and La Protesta continued through the beginning of the next year. According to the newspaper, the participants in one of these forays included eighteen policemen (among them, a security squadron commander), several youths from prestigious families, Deputy Juan Balestra,

Emilio Lamarch, president of the Catholic labor organization, the Círculos de Obreros (see Chapter II), and Juan Carlos Gallegos, a politician and hacendado.²⁶ The last two would later join the Liga Patriótica Argentina. Another precedent had been set: police agents, leading citizens, political figures, and Catholic spokesmen acting together unofficially to repress the left.

Events reached a climax in 1910 with the one-hundredth anniversary of the May Revolution. The government invited officials from Europe and the Americas to join Argentines in celebrating their nation's prosperity and democracy. According to one ironic Spanish writer, however, its efforts were not very successful; the centennial of the birth of liberty was celebrated under a state of siege.²⁷ This had been the congressional response to huge worker demonstrations against the Residence Law and the mass imprisonments and rumors of a general strike during the festivities. Meanwhile police arrested the editorial staffs of several leftist newspapers and other activists.

At the same time civilian groups were mobilizing against the anarchists. Starting before and continuing throughout the celebrations, students paraded through Buenos Aires carrying the national flag, singing patriotic songs, and compelling passers-by to uncover their heads in the presence of the flag. One observer claimed that several people died in a clash between student demonstrators and the anarchist "enemy."²⁸ General Luis Dellepiane, who became the police chief of Buenos Aires after Falcón's death, organized the Policía Civil Auxiliar

to help the police during the celebration. Little is known about this civilian militia — a predecessor of the Liga Patriótica Argentina.²⁹

On the night of May 14, members of the prestigious Sociedad Sportiva Argentina and other prominent citizens, politicians, policemen, government employees, and servants destroyed the much-beleaguered offices and printing presses of La Protesta, La Vanguardia, and La Batalla, another labor organ. They also launched an attack against a building which housed C.O.R.A. and several other workers organizations, but were beaten back. Among the vigilante leaders were Baron Natonio Demarchi, Deputies Juan Balestra, Carlos Carlés, and Pedro Luro, and one Dr. Aubone, probably Carlos Aubone, engineer, politician, and former assistant chief of the federal police, who would join the Liga Patriótica Argentina. Founder and president of the Sociedad Sportiva, Demarchi was an Italian nobleman, President Roca's son-in-law, and future leader of an Argentine branch of an Italian fascist organization. Carlés was Manuel's brother, and Luro was a great haciendado whose son would join the right-wing Legión de Mayo in 1930 (see Chapter V).

The following evening the group returned to the same neighborhood, the tenth precinct, assaulting the same building to Aubone's alleged battlecry of ". . . Long live the bourgeoisie! Death to the enemies of the fatherland!" At the same time, other marauders entered the old ninth precinct, or Barrio Once, an area heavily inhabited by Russian-Jewish immigrants. There they looted and destroyed a grocery

store and raped several women. Another object of attack was the library of a Jewish socialist organization.³⁰ This was not the first manifestation of anti-Semitism in Argentina (see Chapter II), but it was perhaps the first incident marked by violence and by an identification of Russian Jews with leftist politics, a consequence of Radowitzsky's crime. Not only members of the political class but humbler sectors of society made this identification. One visitor to Buenos Aires during the centennial found three or four newsboys beating a little Jewish boy. When he made them account for their actions, their excuse was their victim was a ruso. He concluded:

Everything that in the remotest manner savored of the anarchist was in those days in bad repute in Buenos Aires, and the Russian Jews were not in good odor.³¹

This, too, was a precedent for later years, when all Jewish immigrants would be seen as Bolshevik agents.

Vigilantes carried out other destructive activities in the capital, La Plata, and Rosario, while policemen either joined with them or watched in silence. Nothing happened to the perpetrators of violence and property damage, although police rounded up about 500 labor activists, imprisoning some and deporting others. But the period of protest, anger, and repression had not yet ended. One month after the centennial, on June 26, a bomb exploded in the Teatro Colón and injured several people. The police accused a Russian anarchist named

Romanoff of the deed, although he was probably innocent; anarchists insisted that the police had set off the bomb, so that the authorities would pass harsh legislation against them. Sentiment against anarchism was so high that the next day Congress did in fact pass the Law of Social Defense. This measure prohibited anarchists, along with other foreigners who favored using violence against national governments or institutions, from entering the country. Those who had previously managed to immigrate to Argentina were to be hunted down and expelled. Anarchists were forbidden to hold meetings, issue propaganda, or form groups. Several penalties were to be imposed for bombing or otherwise damaging property and lives (Demarchi and the like, however, were never prosecuted), for defending subversive threats against property and lives by spoken or written word, and for trying to force others to participate in strikes and boycotts (they evidently believed that workers did not strike unless outsiders forced them to do so).³²

This legislation produced swift and decisive consequences — further arrests and deportations, the shutting down of labor headquarters, and, in general, a temporary weakening of the labor movement. However, labor organizations continued to recruit new members and to strike, albeit at a somewhat reduced level; there were 298 strikes in 1910, 102 in 1911, 99 in 1912, and 95 in 1913. The anarchists and other groups never wholly ceased to print and disseminate propaganda, and F.O.R.A. gradually reasserted itself. By 1913 the more overt phase of police persecution had ended, and once more La Protesta was being published and sold openly.³³

The Socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and members of unaffiliated unions were not the only ones to come out against the existing socioeconomic order. Unlinked to any particular ideology or labor organization, other significant protest movements arose: the strike of the inquilinos in 1907, which will be described first,³⁴ and that of the tenant farmers in 1912. As its population grew with the great wave of immigration after 1890, Buenos Aires experienced a severe shortage of housing, particularly of inexpensive housing for workers. The conventillo was one makeshift answer to this problem, although an inadequate one. It was the Argentine version of a tenement house: a large, old, one- or two-storied decrepit building, subdivided into rooms rented by families or groups of workers and offering some shared facilities such as water and toilets. Standards of hygiene and ventilation were notoriously low, despite the existence of municipal regulations. High rents often totalling one-half of a worker's salary forced families of up to ten people to inhabit a single small room. It is estimated that over 10 percent of the population of Buenos Aires in 1907 lived in conventillos; undoubtedly, many others also lived in congested and unhealthy surroundings.

Attempts to organize the tenants, or inquilinos, floundered until 1907, when the city government announced a hike in property taxes. The owners and rent collectors raised rents to cover the additional tax burden — and add a little more to their pockets. The tenants of one building organized and declared a rent strike; residents of

other conventillos quickly imitated their efforts. Within several months the strike spread to include the dwellers of about 2000 conventillos in Buenos Aires, 300 in Rosario, and an undetermined number in Bahia Blanca and other localities — about 140,000 people in all, of which 120,000 were from the capital. The strikers received support from F.O.R.A., U.G.T., Socialists, some members of the political class, and most of the establishment, and it made contact with similar rent strike groups in Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, New York, and Rome.

The largest social movement in pre-World War I Argentina, the strikers failed to win a lasting reprieve from rent hikes. Still, the inquilino movement had two consequences; it alerted reform-minded members of the political class to pressing urban problems, and it demonstrated that the entire lower class — not only the manual workers — could mobilize to protest these conditions.

The tenant farmer strike of 1912³⁵ was another great popular movement of the prewar period which owed no allegiance to any leftist ideology or labor group; indeed, in some ways it was profoundly conservative. A glance at rural conditions will facilitate understanding this strike and similar ones after World War I. While governments since the mid-nineteenth century had theoretically supported foreign colonization, in practice they had made little effort to survey, divide, and distribute the public domain to settlers from abroad. To a great extent, this lack of policy initiative reflected the haciendados' interest in retaining immigrants as laborers

and tenants and not as potential independent farmers. Governments normally ceded or sold at nominal prices large stretches of land to huge colonization companies or to favored individuals. The former resold the land to individual colonists, realizing high profits on the transactions, and when the small farmers were unable to keep up the payments, as was often the case, they were forced off the land. Meanwhile, official policies stimulated speculation, which, combined with the growth of the livestock and grain export industries, caused land prices to soar. Immigrants lacked the funds to buy sufficient land to support themselves, considering the fact that extensive agricultural techniques were practiced, or to develop the property if they were lucky enough to be able to purchase it. Therefore absentee landownership and tenant farming became the rule, particularly in the cereal belt. By 1914 in Buenos Aires province, landowners personally supervised production in 30 percent of all farms, tenants in 54 percent, and employees in 12 percent. The corresponding percentages in other areas were as follows: Santa Fe, 26 percent owners, 69 percent tenants, 6 percent employees; Córdoba, 40 percent, 51 percent, 10 percent, respectively; the nation as a whole, 44 percent, 46 percent, 9 percent.³⁶

Immigrant farmers leased plots on a short-term basis during those periods when cereal production was more profitable than livestock raising. Landowners or their intermediaries, the large colonization firms, contracted with tenants to raise several grain crops on virgin

or pasture land and then plant alfalfa for cattle feed. When the lease expired, the land reverted to pasture. Since they expected to remain only two or three years in each place, farmers were not motivated to build good housing, improve the property, or develop better techniques of production. They concentrated on cultivating grain for export to the world market and thus were dependent upon conditions beyond their control, among them, the vagaries of nature and fluctuations in world demand. Furthermore, tenants suffered from harsh contractual terms; inadequate transportation, credit, and storage facilities; huge debts to intermediaries (who were the only sources of credit and supplies); and, in general, a low standard of living. Around the turn of the century, tenant farmers accepted such adversities because — nature and the market permitting — they could earn a living. Then catastrophe hit; low prices in 1911 and 1912 left many tenants unable to pay their rent and other obligations.

Threats of bankruptcy and eviction forced farmers to organize in protest, starting in June 1912, when 2000 of them met in the southern santafesino town of Alcorta. Beleaguered tenant farmers resolved to strike until landowners and intermediaries lowered rents and lengthened the lease periods, and their counterparts throughout the cereal zone — southern and central Santa Fe, northern and western Buenos Aires, southeastern Cordóba, and northern La Pampa — rapidly followed their lead. The strike lasted about two months and achieved some results, particularly in Santa Fe, whose Radical provincial

government was eager to reach a solution without the intervention of national authorities and forced landowners to compromise with tenants. In contrast, the federal government refused to help strikers, although some government administrators and other members of the political class urged such action.

Formed during the strike, the Federación Agraria Argentina (F.A.A.) pursued the goals of its tenant farmer constituents within the existing order. Its leaders did not (at least at this time) propose radical changes in the system of landownership, nor did they ask landless rural laborers to join. Nevertheless, as was so often to be the case in twentieth-century Argentina, most members of the political class sought to preserve their wealth and power at all costs, overlooking the fact that a small concession to the tenants could avert future problems. Still, the strike left a legacy of a well-organized farmers movement prepared to struggle against hardship and exploitation. The economic depression brought on by World War I and its aftermath would force it back into action.

A description of political movements and political repression in prewar Argentina would not be complete without labor, tenant, and farmer associations. Limits on suffrage, which prevented any meaningful expansion of the political system, and the restricted circulation of political elites within the political class were significant as well. I have already noted that the political class had aimed at populating the desert with foreign agriculturalists, but did not allow significant

amounts of land to pass from its ownership. Similarly, it had hoped to integrate the immigrants into Argentine life while reserving political power for itself.³⁷ One of the ostensible purposes of immigration had been to strengthen government stability, but for a variety of reasons few immigrants or their lower- and middle-class descendants actually participated in politics. First, the number of foreigners who became Argentine citizens was small. In most cases, the failure to obtain citizenship was attributable to either political disinterest or political fatalism, as most immigrants came from areas where political participation was restricted to the wealthy. Impoverished and uneducated newcomers were more often concerned with economic advancement than with the unfamiliar activity of politics.

Other better-off immigrants manifested little desire to obtain citizenship because it offered them few advantages. The Constitution of 1853 guaranteed foreigners almost all the rights of Argentine citizens; the only privilege it denied them was that of suffrage, yet they were even allowed to vote in some local elections. Whether because of loyalty to the old country, feelings of ethnic superiority to Argentines, or the additional rights and protection which foreign citizenship gave them, many preferred to remain aliens. Foreign laborers saw little reason to change their nationality, since many expected to return to their native lands and, at any rate, they did not want to be eligible for the draft.³⁸

For those who desired citizenship, despite the factors enumerated above, the obstacles were many. On paper the requirement — a mere

two-year residence --- was far from stringent, and the naturalization procedure seemed relatively simple. In the hope of preventing potential dissidents from becoming citizens, however, the government encumbered the process. Applicants were forced to submit to police investigations, long bureaucratic delays, and much paperwork, and few judges were generally available. Official meddling aside, it was costly and inconvenient for immigrant farmers to journey to the cities where federal judges presided, or for urban laborers to take off time from work to undergo the lengthy proceedings.³⁹ Even if one secured citizenship and hence voting privileges (if one were male), suffrage rights before 1912 meant little in practice. Electoral fraud was common, as was police repression of political dissenters. Thus, Argentine citizens as well as aliens were excluded from the political system.

Universal male suffrage for naturalized citizens --- in practice as well as in theory --- became a reality largely through the efforts of Hipólita Yrigoyen and the Unión Cívica Radical (U.C.R.), or the Radical party.⁴⁰ Initially the Radicals' struggle to attain power reflected little more than the competition between opposing factions within the political class. Later, however, this contest assumed wider proportions, as U.C.R. leaders realized that their victory would depend on mobilizing popular support.

The beginnings of the Radical party can be traced back to the Revolution of 1890. This momentous political event was preceded by a period of frenzied economic activity, characterized by unbridled

speculation, runaway inflation, a soaring foreign debt, and the ostentatious display of wealth by some members of the political class. Dissatisfaction mounted over these conditions, as well as over the closed political system, and manifested itself in the formation of the Unión Cívica in 1889. Its adherents came from varied backgrounds, although most were members of the political class. Austere, nationalistic, and republican, they viewed the opulent, authoritarian, and cosmopolitan political elite with distaste; the differences between the two groups, however, were more of style than of substance. Many also felt excluded from positions of influence, particularly young aspiring students and politicians from Buenos Aires, as Roca and his presidential successor Miguel Juárez Celman had tended to fill posts with fellow provincials. Former president Bartolomé Mitre and his followers fit both these characteristics, as did Catholic militants such as Pedro Goyena and José Manuel Estrada, who in addition were displeased with the reigning spirit of liberal anticlericalism. The Unión Cívica also included some individuals of lower social origins, principally native-born shop owners and artisans severely hit by the economic crisis. They were found mainly in the group of autonomistas (a provincial party of Buenos Aires whose populist roots lay in federalism and in rosismo) which congregated around the figure of Leandro N. Alem. This group, however, was not exclusively composed of the popular sectors; great landowners and distinguished provincial politicians were also among its ranks.

Under Alem's leadership, the Unión Cívica aimed at securing guaranteed public liberties, particularly suffrage. When the economy crashed in 1890, the civistas, with some military and popular support, rose up against the Juárez Celman regime. Although the latter was able to quell the uprising, the Unión Cívica had proven its strength, and the political elite was forced to make concessions: complete amnesty for the rebels and the eviction of Juárez Celman from office. After this partial victory, the Unión Cívica divided into several groups, of which the most significant were the Unión Cívica Nacional and the Unión Cívica Radical. (Another group, under Juan B. Justo, eventually emerged in the form of the Socialist party.) The former, under Mitre, proclaimed itself satisfied with the results of the revolution and allied with the political elite. Alem and the U.C.R. continued to oppose Roca and the government and demanded universal male suffrage. The Radicals refused to participate in the fraudulent electoral system and hoped to reach power by erecting a strong national party organization and carrying out a successful revolution. They failed in the second objective — but the first strategy ultimately reaped benefits. Although Alem's successor, Hipólito Yrigoyen, continued to dream of capturing office through a revolution, electoral reform, an effective party machine, and divisions in the political elite resulted in his victorious presidential campaign of 1916.

In order to understand the course of political developments and the rise of the forces of counterrevolution, it is essential to know

something about one of the latter's main opponents, the Radical leader Yrigoyen.⁴¹ Yrigoyen took over the leadership of the Radicals after breaking with his uncle Alem and helping to bring about the latter's downfall. The reasons for this split are not very clear, but the antagonism probably grew out of personality differences: Alem, the intellectual familiar with European culture, the flashy and spellbinding orator; versus Yrigoyen, the diligent behind-the-scenes manipulator, the man of few ideas — and poorly articulated ones at that. Yrigoyen believed that the Radicals' mission was to save Argentina from the perfidious and decadent forces that ruled it, or what he called el régimen, and that he was destined to lead this divinely ordained struggle. Alem was a casualty of these powerful ambitions.

Who belonged to this sinister body, the régimen? Yrigoyen's definition of membership excluded any conception of class; in this way it presaged future right-wing definitions of the régimen. To his style of thinking, selfish materialism, dishonesty, and utter disregard for popular national sentiments characterized the régimen and at the same time nullified its right to rule. He challenged its political monopoly; he never questioned the monopoly on land ownership and other economic privileges exercised by the political class — to which he and most Radical leaders belonged. Despite his father's humble immigrant origins, Yrigoyen was linked to this exalted group through his mother's family, his university and business connections, and his interests as an haciendado. The main trait which distinguished

important Radical figures from their counterparts in government was not differences in wealth but the fact that fewer of their ancestors had occupied public office. Also, their ancestors had generally arrived later than those of the political elite, and in this respect they had less social prestige.⁴² The Radicals represented a rival faction within the political class challenging the political elite for power, although they also struggled to enlarge the political system by incorporating into it the middle class.

The party's stance on suffrage rights and morality appealed to disenchanted members of the political class and especially to the middle class. Yrigoyen's nationalism attracted not only the criollos among its ranks but also the descendants of immigrants, eager to prove their argentinidad. The middle class also found other reasons for supporting the U.C.R. In a country whose economy depended so heavily on its export sector, the native-born middle class faced a continual employment dilemma. Immigrants tended to create opportunities for themselves in retail business and light industry, while members of the political class dominated the government bureaucracy and, along with foreigners, occupied the highest positions in the import-export trade, the financial sector, and the foreign companies. Out of desire for mobility and prestige and lack of sufficient other opportunities, the descendants of immigrants assumed the same employment preferences as the political class. They struggled to enter the universities, the liberal professions, and the political patronage network, and Yrigoyen

hinted that he would support their aspirations. This native-born middle class became staunchly yrigoyenista and obtained rewards for its loyalty after 1916. The presence of second- and third-generation middle-class Argentines among party leaders, however, did not become noticeable until Yrigoyen's second presidency.

Radicalism represented no economic threat to the political class, at least not initially. As stated above, Yrigoyen did not object to the economic status quo; he only hoped to redistribute income in favor of the middle class. He also firmly supported the export economy. His intentions toward the lower class were paternalistic and far from revolutionary. Before 1916 his main response to the existence of poverty was to donate his salary to charity, which he continued to do throughout his career, and to direct the Radical machine to distribute food and other favors to potential voters.

In view of the above, the political class did not fear the Radicals. Nor did the Socialists constitute a threat. From the national leaders' point of view, at least the Socialists were playing the political game by the established rules; they wrote newspaper articles, signed petitions, delivered public speeches, campaigned for votes, and after peaceful protest abided by fraudulent election results. Once elected to Congress, Socialists tried to pass legislation helpful to workers and urban consumers. If they did support unions and advance revolutionary theories, still the restrained party intellectuals spoke a moderate language intelligible to the political class and inspired the latters' grudging admiration.

Unlike the Socialists, however, the anarchists and syndicalists, with their inflammatory direct action tactics, were much less amenable to compromise. If these extremists captured the allegiance of the masses, the future of the present political class would be cloudy indeed. More far-sighted leaders like President Roque Sáenz Peña (1910-1914) recognized that curbing the leftist threat would require bringing the masses into the established political order. This would be accomplished by stealing the Radicals' thunder and guaranteeing universal male suffrage and the secret ballot. They hoped that the official parties would be able to stay in power, anyway, by attracting voters with their new reformist stance. If not, the Radicals were sure to win, but aside from suffrage rights and "morality," their program was minimal and mild. A Radical victory now was better than a leftist one in the future.⁴³

Cognizant of Yrigoyen's popularity and influence, prominent politicians in the ruling circles such as Presidents Sáenz Peña, Carlos Pellegrini (1892-94), and José Figueroa Alcorta (1906-10) had carefully maintained ties with him. After the abortive Radical revolution of 1905, these leaders recognized the necessity of promoting cohesion within the political class and preventing these periodic uprisings, particularly in view of the growing leftist danger. Contacts between officialdom and Yrigoyen increased in frequency and importance; out of meetings between Sáenz Peña and the Radical leader emerged the draft version of the long-awaited electoral reform law

which passed Congress in 1912 and bore the former's name.⁴⁴ Whether the official parties would stay in office remained to be proven.

The 1916 presidential race was the testing ground for this proposition.⁴⁵ Against the oddly reluctant Yrigoyen were pitted the Socialist Justo and Lisandro De la Torre, head of a new coalition of provincial parties, mostly of the political elite, called the Partido Demócrata Progresista (P.D.P.). The old ruling party of Roca, Juárez Celman, and Pellegrini, the Partido Autonomista Nacional had long since fragmented into personalist factions, but the inheritors of its mantle, as well as other anti-yrigoyenistas, realized the need to unite in order to prevent a Radical victory, and most of them backed the P.D.P. Conspicuously absent from this alliance was the most official of all official parties, the powerful Partido Conservador of Buenos Aires province, founded in 1908 and led by Marcelino Ugarte. A former governor of Buenos Aires whose favor was sought by would-be presidents, this notoriously corrupt political boss epitomized the most unsavory aspects of the régimen. Ugarte nursed ambitions of his own, as did other figures, and together they withheld support from the P.D.P. and split its ranks, thus delivering victory to Yrigoyen in a close election. The fact that Ugarte and others ultimately preferred Yrigoyen to De la Torre demonstrated that they did not fear the Radicals. It also demonstrated their distrust for De la Torre and the demócratas progresistas, who figure prominently in this study.

To some of its adherents the formation of the P.D.P. represented nothing more than a negative act: to keep Yrigoyen out of the

presidency. If this was its sole purpose, however, party members made a mistake in choosing De la Torre as their leader. True, he possessed the requisite qualifications of high social status (he owned land and belonged to the prestigious Jockey Club) and opposition to Yrigoyen, but he never enjoyed a secure power base in the political class. The iconoclastic santafesino had participated in the 1890 revolution and had followed his close friend Alem into the Radical Party. A bitter quarrel with Yrigoyen, whom he viewed as overly ambitious and dictatorial, led to his departure from the party. De la Torre's hatred of yrigoyenismo was almost matched by his antipathy toward the régimen. In his veneration for civil liberties, his anticlericalism, and his seeming lack of rapport with the masses, De la Torre was a perfect nineteenth-century liberal. At the same time, the provincial party he led before 1916, the immigrant farmer-based Liga del Sur, consistently supported the protective tariff — the only contemporary party to take such a stand.⁴⁶ De la Torre's firm advocacy of federalism had some precedents in Argentine liberalism, particularly the non-porteño variety, but was not likely to win him friends from the régimen.

De la Torre seemed to have delighted in being different, for the P.D.P. platform contained a number of novelties. It unequivocally supported not only guaranteed universal suffrage and secret balloting, the latter of which Ugarte and his colleagues opposed, but open party conventions, to which the Radicals objected. Other planks included

protection for industry, creation of national merchant marine, government funding for workers mutual aid societies, a light income tax, and some state controls over exports. The platform manifested more concern for economic nationalism, modernization, and social welfare than did that of the Radicals. Was this the platform of a negative and narrowly conservative party? One cannot assume that the P.D.P.'s economic and social proposals were the main attraction for the fervent anti-Radicals who joined it, nor that they represented much more than election rhetoric, but they are interesting nonetheless. At least they revealed the idealism of some party ideologues, who genuinely hoped that the party would combine the best features of the old political elite with a reformist and nationalist spirit.⁴⁷ These demócratas progresistas included Carlos Ibarguren, José María Rosa, Francisco Uriburu, General José F. Uriburu, Roberto and Alfonso de Laferrère, all of whom later enrolled in the far right.

Notes

1

T. B. Bottomore, Elites and Society (New York, 1964), pp. 8-9.

2

In practice it is often difficult to distinguish between the political class and the upper class. I have usually employed the former term in such cases.

3

Roberto Etchepareborda raised similar questions on the nature of the "elite" in "La estructura sociopolitica argentina y la Generación del Ochenta," Latin American Research Review, XIII (1978), pp. 127-134.

4

Thomas F. McGann, Argentina, the United States and the Inter-American System, 1880-1914 (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 32-33.

5

Natalio R. Botana, El orden conservador. La política argentina entre 1880 y 1916 (Buenos Aires, 1977), pp. 156-161.

6

José Luis Romero, A History of Argentine Political Thought, trans. by Thomas F. McGann (2nd ed.; Stanford, 1968), p. 183. The page cited marks the first time the author uses this term.

7

Carlos Ibarguren, La historia que he vivido (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1969), pp. 56-57.

8

McGann, Argentina, pp. 43-45; Romero, Political Thought, pp. 179-181. On the influence of positivism in Latin America, see Leopoldo Zea, El positivismo en México (México, 1943).

9

See, for example, Carleton Hayes' description of "sectarian liberalism" in A Generation of Materialism, 1871-1900 (2nd ed.; New York, 1963), pp. 49-50.

10

1871 marked the beginning of the French Third Republic and 1884 the passage of a suffrage law for rural workers in England, followed by a redistricting law in 1885.

11

On the advantages and disadvantages of an export economy in general, see Roberto Cortés Conde, The First Stages of Modernization in Spanish America (New York, 1974) and Richard Graham, Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil, 1850-1914 (London, 1968). The Argentine government's railroad and immigration policies were exceptions to the rule of classical liberalism. Development models other than the liberal export-oriented one existed — such as that of Paraguay under Francia — but they were politically unattractive.

12

Gino Germani, Política y sociedad en una época de transición (Buenos Aires, 1962), pp. 180-181.

13

República Argentina, Dirección Nacional del Servicio Estadístico, Cuarto censo general de la Nación, I (Buenos Aires, 1947), p. LXII, tables 21 and 23; Solberg, Immigration and Nationalism, p. 36.

14

James R. Scobie, Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910 (New York, 1974), p. 273; Germani, Política y sociedad, pp. 179 and 188.

15

República Argentina, Cuarto censo, I, p. LXXI, table 31; República Argentina, Comisión Directiva del Censo, Segundo censo de la República Argentina, mayo 10 de 1895, II (Buenos Aires, 1898), p. 153, table 3; República Argentina, Comisión Nacional del Censo, Tercer censo nacional, levantado el primero de junio de 1914, I (Buenos Aires, 1916), p. 262.

16

Carlos F. Díaz Alejandro, Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic (New Haven, 1970), pp. 2-3 and 5; República Argentina, Tercer censo, IX (1919), pp. 405-406; República Argentina, Cuarto censo, I, p. 1.

17

Germani, Política y sociedad, pp. 195 and 200.

18

República Argentina, Cuarto censo, I, p. 47; for a description of the city see Scobie, Buenos Aires.

19

Scobie, Buenos Aires, pp. 137-142; José Panettieri, Los trabajadores en tiempos de la inmigración masiva en Argentina, 1870-1910 (La Plata, 1966), pp. 58 and 68.

20

In writing the following general account of labor history, I have relied on these sources: Panettieri, Los trabajadores; Hobart Spalding, La clase trabajadora argentina (documentos para su historia — 1890/1912) (Buenos Aires, 1970), pp. 17-95; Samuel L. Baily, Labor, Nationalism and Politics in Argentina (New Brunswick, N.J., 1967); Sebastián Marotta, El movimiento sindical argentino: su génesis y desarrollo, I - II (Buenos Aires, 1960-1961); Dardo Cúneo, Juan B. Justo y las luchas sociales en la Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1956); S. Fanny Simon, "Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism in South America," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXVI (Feb. 1946), pp. 38-59. On anarchism in general see James Joll, The Anarchists (Boston, 1964); on George Sorel and syndicalism see, for example, Michael Curtis, Three Against the Third Republic (Princeton, 1959), especially pp. 254-262.

21

Peter H. Smith, Argentina and the Failure of Democracy. Conflict Among Political Elites, 1904-1955 (Madison, 1974), p. 31. Smith found that only about 8 percent of the Socialists in the Chamber of Deputies between 1916 and 1930 were of "aristocratic" background, in contrast to 73 percent of the Conservatives, for example.

22

Solberg, Immigration and Nationalism, p. 109.

23

Jerónimo Remorino, ed., Anales de legislación argentina, III (Buenos Aires, 1954), p. 560.

24

Marotta, Movimiento sindical, II, pp. 25-35 and 41.

25

Ibid., p. 39; La Nación, Nov. 17, 1909; Caras y Caretas, Nov. 20, 1909; Solberg, Immigration and Nationalism, pp. 122-123.

26

La Protesta, Jan. 19 and 26, 1910.

27

Santiago Rusiñol, Esquella de la Torrassa (n.p., n.d.), no page number given, quoted by Marotta, Movimiento sindical, II, p. 72, footnote 1.

28

Charles Warren Currier, Lands of the Southern Cross. A Visit to South America (Washington, D.C., 1911), pp. 105-106.

29

José R. Romariz, La semana trágica. Relato de los hechos sangrientos del año 1919 (Buenos Aires, 1952), p. 170. On the civilian-led repression of May 1910, see Marotta, Movimiento sindical, II, pp. 69-79; Caras y Caretas, May 14, 1910; and Enrique Dickmann, Recuerdos de un militante socialista (Buenos Aires, 1949), pp. 185-188. The information on persons who participated in the repression comes from the biographical sources listed separately in the bibliography. Unless otherwise noted, all biographical information in the text comes from these works.

30

Leonardo Senkman, "Primer hito: de 'La Bolsa' a la Semana Trágica," Nueva Presencia, July 9, 1977.

31

Currier, Southern Cross, p. 129.

32

Marotta, Movimiento sindical, II, pp. 77 and 81; Solberg, Immigration and Nationalism, p. 114; Remorino, Anales, III, pp. 787-789; Simon, "Anarchism," p. 44; Dickmann, Recuerdos, pp. 188-189.

33

Simon, "Anarchism," p. 46; Spalding, Clase trabajadora, p. 88.

34

Spalding, Clase trabajadora, pp. 449-496 (containing a description of and documents related to the strike); Scobie, Buenos Aires, pp. 156-158.

35

On rural conditions and the strike see Silvio Spangenberg, "El conflicto agrario del sud de Santa Fe," Boletín del Museo Social Argentino, I (1912), pp. 522-531; Carl Solberg, "Rural Unrest and Agrarian Policy in Argentina, 1912-1930," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, XIII (Jan. 1971), pp. 18-27. Also see Plácido Grela, El grito de Alcorta (Rosario, 1958).

36

República Argentina, Tercer censo, V (1919), pp. 837-838.

37

Germani, Política y sociedad, p. 205.

38

James R. Scobie, Argentina, A City and a Nation (New York, 1964), p. 190.

39

Ibid; Solberg, Immigration and Nationalism, p. 125.

40

On the U.C.R. see Julio Codio, ed., La revolución del 90 (Buenos Aires, 1974); Peter G. Snow, Argentine Radicalism: The History and Doctrine of the Radical Civic Union (Iowa City, 1965); Rock, Politics in Argentina.

41

On Yrigoyen see Manuel Gálvez, Vida de Hipólita Yrigoyen -- el hombre del misterio (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1939); and Félix Luna, Yrigoyen, el templario de la libertad (Buenos Aires, 1954).

42

Ezequiel Gallo (h.) and Silvia Sigal, "La formación de los partidos políticos contemporáneos: al U.C.R. (1890-1916)," in Argentina, sociedad de masas, ed. by Torcuato S. Di Tella, Gino Germani, Jorge Graciarena, and collaborators (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1965), pp. 162-169. The U.C.R. leaders had a high degree of acquired status and a low degree of ascriptive status; they were not tied to the political elite kinship network.

43

Jorge Abelardo Ramos, Revolución y contrarrevolución en la Argentina, III (3rd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1970), pp. 117 and 168-169.

44

Romero, Political Thought, p. 218.

45

On the P.D.P. and the election of 1916 see Botana, Orden conservador, pp. 315-336; Oscar Cornblit, "La opción conservadora en la política argentina," Desarrollo Económico, XIV (Jan.-Mar. 1975), pp. 624-628; Ibarguren, La historia, pp. 279-294. See also Lisandro De la Torre, Campañas presidenciales, in Obras, ed. by Raúl Larra, V (Buenos Aires, 1952), pp. 89, 102-103, 107-109.

46

Oscar Cornblit described the Liga del Sur in "Inmigrantes y empresarios en la política argentina," in Los fragmentos del poder: de la oligarquía a la poliarquía argentina, ed. by Torcuato S. Di Tella and Tulio Halperin Donghi (Buenos Aires, 1969), pp. 422-423, 430, 434.

47

La Nación, Sept. 11, 1915; Ibarguren, La historia, pp. 286-287; Ezequiel Gallo (h.) and Roberto Cortés Conde, Argentina, la república conservadora (Buenos Aires, 1972), p. 230.

CHAPTER II IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Argentine citizens of the 1870's would have found it difficult to recognize their country in 1914, particularly Buenos Aires and the littoral region. Rapid economic development had changed the nation's face, not only by galvanizing agricultural production but by stimulating immigration, urbanization, and industrialization and thereby restructuring society. Problems had accompanied these changes, primary among them being the "social question": the desire of the masses to improve their living and working conditions and to participate more actively in the decision making which affected their lives. For the middle class, this generally meant striving to enlarge the political system so as to include its members, who then would be able to bargain for increased access to the universities and the public employment sector and for measures favoring urban consumers. But the main component of the social question was the situation of the proletariat. Like the middle class, many laborers also wanted to be included in a broader political system, but their principal aim was to secure economic concessions from their employers and eventually some control over production. The latter's hostility to their demands convinced many workers that the conflict between them and the capitalists formed part of a historically determined class struggle taking place throughout the world.

The political class found ways of dealing with the proletariat, whose radicalism was partly a product of the former's obduracy. Underlying its measures of repression and cooptation was a belief in the legitimacy of the class hierarchy and the need to maintain it. Indeed, it was only natural for its members to venerate a social system which had evolved over centuries, one with which they were familiar and one from which they benefited. It was understandable for individuals with a stake in the established order to accept that order as given and, if unsatisfied with that order, to bring about changes within it rather than tear it down completely. Normally most people remain unconscious of making the decision to embrace the system or reject it. However, in times of crisis, this belief in the status quo becomes explicit, as when vigilantes attacked labor radicals in May 1910 to the cry of "Long live the bourgeoisie!" Other groups would openly manifest this view in 1919. Except during the centennial, in the prewar period this belief generally remained implicit and often found expression in words and deeds which at first glance may appear contradictory or unrelated to the issue of class structure. In this chapter I will trace diverse manifestations of this belief in the status quo, as well as different opinions on the best ways of maintaining it. These elements were merging into what may be called an ideology of order, or more specifically, of social control.¹ This ideology represented the extent to which Argentine liberalism, challenged by social and political pressures, had become defensive and conservative rather than progressive and innovative.

One of the main strands of the ideology of social control was the changing view of immigration.² According to Argentine liberals throughout much of the nineteenth century, the task of economic development required an intelligent, hard-working labor force. In addition, the stability of a republican government, even one which largely eliminated popular involvement, demanded discipline on the part of the masses and obedience to authority. Through its allegiance to the caudillos, its gaucho mode of existence, and its displays of violence, the dark-skinned Latin population had seemingly demonstrated its inherent ignorance, laziness, and barbarism, characteristics which scarcely qualified it to help modernize the country.³ To the liberals, fulfillment of their economic and political ideals therefore required europeanization.

Sarmiento, Alberdi, and others hoped for an influx from north-western Europe (although northern Italians and northern Spaniards were also acceptable to Alberdi), but only a minority of the immigrants who arrived after 1860 were the preferred Englishmen, Frenchmen, Swiss, Germans, and so on. The vast majority included Italians, Spaniards, and even Russian Jews. As this situation became clear, critics of immigration arose, even from within the ranks of its original supporters. Another cause for dissatisfaction was the fact that as time went by, the newcomers preferred to settle in the cities rather than the countryside. One of the most important factors in their decision was the difficulty in acquiring their own property under the

existing land tenure system. Rather than assume the unrewarding burdens of rural laborers or tenant farmers, many immigrants chose to seek employment in the urban areas. Argentine commentators usually overlooked the causes of this situation and instead blamed foreigners for their lack of agricultural skills, their laziness, and their "parasitism." This criticism became harsher as the urban middle and lower classes became more immigrant in origin.

After the turn of the century another factor evolved which would influence Argentine views of immigrants and class — the growing importance of foreign affairs and national defense issues. In 1898 and again in 1901, boundary disputes between Argentina and Chile threatened to escalate into full-scale war. Eager to improve the state of the nation's defenses and determined not to capitulate to Chile, people throughout Argentina held public assemblies, practiced target-shooting, and set up local volunteer militias. These diverse groups joined together under the title of Liga Patriótica Nacional and included not only prominent citizens and their sons but also members of immigrant communities. In an editorial entitled "The Nation of Immigrants," La Prensa praised foreigners for their contribution to Argentine life and their loyalty to their new homeland, noting that they had been indistinguishable from the native-born in the recent patriotic meetings. The immigrant was a superior being "who in body and soul belongs to the adopted fatherland, seat and origin of his fortune and fatherland of his children." Out of immigrant families would come young Argentine

citizens, swelled with national pride, who would volunteer in droves to fight their country's enemies. Blessed with these potential recruits, the Argentine civilization was superior to the Chilean, for unlike the latter, it did not have to depend on a German-trained professional army for its protection.⁴

The Liga Patriótica Nacional resolved to stimulate citizen defense efforts and interest in foreign affairs, convince the government to take steps to re-establish Argentine influence on the continent, lobby for increasing the size of the navy and army, and inspire respect and love among the population for the armed forces. Considering the sizeable immigrant involvement in the Liga noted by La Prensa, one of its other objectives was puzzling: to strengthen the ties of immigrants to their adopted homeland and to stimulate naturalization.⁵ Apparently the foreigners' displays of patriotic sentiment had not convinced Liga leaders of their sincerity. Instead they noted the low rate of naturalization, as had Sarmiento years before, and concluded that a large body of unincorporated foreigners might in the future constitute a danger to the nation, especially in times of external crisis. However, the obstacles toward becoming a citizen and the disadvantages it entailed were not removed; immigrants, by and large, retained their foreign citizenship.

The potential inner threat to national defense continued to pre-occupy some Argentine intellectuals and leaders, particularly with the rise of the labor movement. Class conflict in itself represented a

danger, for it would divide the nation and weaken its resistance to attack. Moreover, many leftists opposed fighting for their country against the workers of other countries, or simply were pacifists. The Socialists' stand against militarism, obligatory military service, and military expenditures roused nationalistic ire. On the eve of World War I, one Argentine general wrote an article criticizing the party's views. The Socialists, he noted, objected to what they considered the Argentine army's imitation of the Prussian model and yet, paradoxically, they applied a European theory of class struggle to a country bereft of capital, industry, and inhabitants, so unlike the continent. Like the Socialists, the author did not wish for war, but he believed that only the threat of force, not "progress" or universal benevolence, could prevent it. Moreover, despite Socialist rhetoric, the army represented no danger to Argentine civil tradition; if all male citizens served in it, it could not possibly threaten the nation, for it was the nation. He maintained that the Socialists did not want to weaken the military out of sheer irrationality, but out of a desire to protect their interests. As the army was the only organization which society could pit against the revolutionary masses, it was natural that the Socialists did all they could to debilitate it. For this reason they also lashed out against the military spirit and all manifestations of vitality, order, discipline, and cohesion.⁶ Clearly, to the author the left was antinational. He demonstrated this belief later on, when he led the Revolution of 1930 and became provisional president. His name was José F. Uriburu.

Meanwhile, as the centennial approached, Brazil replaced Chile as the principal foreign opponent. The rivalry between Brazil and Argentina dated back to the colonial period, but at this time the growing friendship between the former and the United States and the naval armaments race between the two South American powers exacerbated it. Many Argentines came to see Brazil as their natural enemy — indeed, the natural enemy of all Spanish American nations — not only because of its strategic interests but because of differences in culture, language, and racial composition. The racial contrast between the Brazilian population, with its sizeable proportion of blacks and mulattos, and the preponderance of whites in Argentina, assumed great significance at a time when racial theories were in vogue.

Racism became popular among Argentine intellectuals, who were familiar with the latest European currents of thought and were impressed with the works of Chamberlain, De Gobineau, Le Bon, and others. They combined racist, social Darwinist, and imperialist ideas to formulate a doctrine of Argentine manifest destiny. In their opinion the Argentine "race," by virtue of its whiteness, was biologically superior to those which surrounded it, the Chilean mestizos, the Bolivian and Paraguayan Indians, the Brazilian blacks and mulattos. Argentines would have to fulfil their proper destiny as the supreme race in the continent. The main organ for these beliefs was the Revista de Derecho, Historia y Letras, and it is not surprising that its editor,

Estanislao S. Zeballos (also foreign minister under Roque Sáenz Peña), and one of its main contributors, Manuel Carlés, became prominent members of the Liga Patriótica Argentina.⁷

Accompanying this racist and social Darwinist trend was an attempt to vindicate the Argentine cultural heritage and, in particular, its Hispanic roots. It was around this time that some historians and essayists began to react against the liberal historians' view of the past, against Sarmiento's "Civilization versus Barbarism" dichotomy. The city no longer seemed the image of progress; instead it presented the spectacle of crime, disease, congestion, filth, and prostitution. Some intellectuals blamed foreigners for these conditions (which, ironically, hurt foreigners the most) and in addition for not having uplifted Argentine political conduct. The contradiction between the latter attitude and the fact that most of them, as members of the political class, favored minority rule, did not evidently occur to them. At any rate, viewed with hindsight the gauchos and caudillos no longer seemed as worthy of condemnation as they had before. Symptomatic of these new perspectives were the revisionist works on Juan Manuel de Rosas, in which authors such as Ernesto Quesada judged the Dictator more objectively than had previously been the case.⁸

The gaucho and the Hispanic past found their greatest defenders in the cultural nationalists. Lured by the cultural attractions of the great metropolis, this new generation of writers had left their

native provinces after 1900 for Buenos Aires. The bella época of the capital — the luxury, the cosmopolitanism, the urban blight, and nascent lower-class radicalism — repelled them and aroused their nostalgia for the interior and for bygone days. Manual Gálvez, Ricardo Rojas, Leopoldo Lugones (after his initial Socialism and anarchism had faded), and others rejected the previous generation's arguments for immigration and stressed the native contribution to national culture. But their reasoning proved to be as racist as that of their predecessors, except that now the tables were turned; they denounced foreigners in harsh terms once reserved for describing criollos and saved all their praise for the latter.

Of the cultural nationalists, Gálvez in particular deplored what he saw as the inherent utilitarianism, materialism, and skepticism of the immigrants, which the latter had supposedly injected into Argentine life. To govern no longer meant to populate but to Argentinize. Argentina could not and should not expel the immigrants who had helped build the country, but it would have to absorb them completely. Assimilation would only be one way; the national culture — Hispanic, Catholic, idealistic — would temper the character of the immigrants, not the other way around. The soul of the "race" and Argentine spirituality would be preserved and strengthened over the opposition of fanatic Hispanophobes, who included anticlericals, normal school teachers (still under Sarmiento's influence!), and mulattos, whose hatred for Spain was "the hatred of the dark for the white."⁹

The cultural nationalists defined the Argentine character in terms relevant to traditional society — terms which did not threaten the existing order. In an ironic about-face from Sarmiento's position, the hitherto-reviled gaucho was now viewed as a model for the masses to follow. Loyal and obedient to his employer, content with his station in life and indifferent to self-advancement, opposed to thrift, rational behavior, and planning, the cultural nationalists' idealized version of the gaucho was the perfect antithesis of the successful foreign-born entrepreneur and the labor activist alike.¹⁰

The attempts of lower-class immigrants to assimilate met relatively little resistance from their native counterparts. At the same time, the former tended not to identify strongly with their countries of origin. The wealthier immigrants, on the other hand, tended to feel strong ethnic and national loyalties and sensed the cultural differences between themselves and native Argentines, particularly when these differences were reinforced by criollo upper-class scorn and discrimination. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a significant number of prominent immigrants, mostly of British, French, German, Belgian, and Swiss background, succeeded in gaining admittance to the upper class. However, the latter sought to exclude many prosperous foreign businessmen from its ranks, particularly the more recent arrivals from southern and eastern Europe and the Middle East. Leading intellectuals cited the latter's assumed materialism, garishness, and cultural inferiority as

reasons for such discriminatory action, although as far as garishness was concerned, it would have been difficult to outdo many native-born estanciero families.¹¹

Excluded from many prestigious circles, foreign entrepreneurs turned back to their ethnic communities to occupy leadership positions and help strengthen ethnic social institutions. However, cultural nationalists also found these actions alarming. According to such critics, foreign "cultural exclusivity" threatened to undermine the national culture and loyalty to the national flag. They failed to acknowledge the difficulties involved in becoming a citizen (and the lack of incentives for doing so) or the fact that immigrants created mutual aid societies, hospitals, libraries, and private schools partly in order to fill needs the government did not satisfy. Although ethnic groups often resided in certain barrios or conventillos, the rural immigrant colonies were regarded as isolated pockets of alien culture and thus as the greatest dangers to the homeland. The schools within these immigrant colonies, and in particular the Jewish schools, became a focus of controversy.

For many years education had been an important issue for the political class. The liberal political elite had viewed it as a means of national consolidation and enlightenment of the masses. This was the reasoning behind the famous law of 1884 which established a public network of obligatory, free, and secular primary schools. Catholic religious instruction was eliminated from the obligatory program

because it was identified with backwardness and because it seemed to interfere with the educational system's goal of instilling allegiance to the nation and to the reigning ideal of progress. In addition liberals claimed that it would not please the Protestant immigrants who they hoped would flock to Argentine shores.

After the beginnings of mass immigration, public secular education was intended to fuse the children of native Argentines and foreigners into one nationality. By stressing Argentine history, geography, literature, and customs, by offering these subjects only in Spanish, by repeatedly drilling students on patriotism and teaching them national songs, the schools would frustrate the attempts of some ethnic groups to preserve their languages and traditions and would furthermore combat radicalism. Immigrants would adopt the "national values" and national symbols (such as the gaucho) presented by the schools — which signified that they would accept the hierarchical class structure. According to one foreign visitor in 1912, Argentine schools were dominated by nationalist preoccupations.¹²

The schools in immigrant colonies seemed to remain outside the community of national values which cultural nationalists were eager to create. They charged that in these schools foreign-born teachers taught in foreign languages and imparted no knowledge of the country they inhabited. Sarmiento had already pointed out this problem in a series of articles on the Italian schools in Argentina, written in 1881, where he noted that they "Italianized" their pupils and impeded

the formation of Argentine citizens and of a national culture.¹³ Following this line of thought was Ricardo Rojas, possibly the most influential of the cultural nationalists. In his seminal work, La restauración nacionalista (1909), he charged that the private (ethnic) schools in Argentina had served as agents of "national dissolution." He described them as colonialist or imperialist institutions which attacked the Argentine nationality, especially its essential elements of language and national character, and which obscured the source of the classic republican virtues. The Argentine government would have to reclaim the schools on its soil so that they would serve the nation under its control, but Rojas recognized that this would be a difficult task.

A half century of cosmopolitanism in the population, of European capitalism in business enterprises, of abdications in political thought, of Encyclopedism in the public school and internationalism in the private school, do not favor . . . the diffusion of nationalist ideas.

And yet the reassertion of nationalism, beginning in the schools, was urgently required, for Argentina faced constant humiliation. Jewish and British capitalists considered Argentina their colony, and the Italians were beginning to view it the same way, while other Europeans did not even know where the nation was located.¹⁴

Rojas insisted that the restoration of nationalism did not signify liturgical patriotism, unequivocal hostility to anything foreign, the

reimplantation of gaucho customs or of old economic and social forms. When he wrote this book he probably did not recognize its conservative and chauvinistic implications, but other men seized upon his cultural nationalism to justify the existing social structure. Years later, Rojas fled from the consequences of his ideas, asserting that his aim had been to incorporate the nationalism, freedom, and individual of the gaucho into a new form of liberalism appropriate for Argentine circumstances, one which would protect Argentine economic interests and insist that profits earned by foreign capital be kept within Argentina.¹⁵

Even a relatively progressive nationalist like Rojas, however, saw the Jewish schools as the worst offenders against national unity. Although Jews had lived in the area since the colonial period, their number was small until the 1880's, when the great pogroms in Russia forced that country's Jewish inhabitants to consider emigration. In order to help relocate the victims of these persecutions and return his co-religionists to the soil, the German financier and philanthropist Baron Maurice Hirsch established the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA). The JCA set up agricultural colonies in Entre Ríos, Santa Fe, western Buenos Aires, and eastern La Pampa. After 1891 thousands of Russian Jews settled in these colonies, while others became artisans, workers, storeowners, and small industrialists in the cities. Meanwhile, Jews from other areas also emigrated to Argentina, but in 1909 most of the 35,950 Jews in the country were still of Russian origin, and 19,360 of them lived in the JCA colonies.¹⁶

Charges of separatism and other sins were not new to Jewish ears; such criticism had been disseminated throughout Argentina since before the arrival of the Russian immigrants. In the 1880's a French newspaper in Buenos Aires reproduced the anti-Semitic arguments of Edouard Drumont for its porteño readers. La Nación praised Jewish accomplishments in the arts, sciences, and business and did not oppose Jewish immigration per se, but it criticized proposed plans for organized Jewish colonization in the interior. The editors predicted that the Jews would not adapt themselves to Argentine conditions and would form an isolated enclave. Their opinions reflected those of the founder of La Nación, Bartolomé Mitre, who had opposed agricultural colonies based on one ethnic group as well as Jewish immigration.¹⁷

More significant was Julián Martel's widely-read novel, La Bolsa, set during the boom years of the 1880's and the crash which followed. Writing in 1890, when few Jews resided in the country, Martel nonetheless blamed the corruption and the financial disaster on Jewish avarice. His villains were unsavory Jewish financiers and businessmen who, he believed, formed part of international Jewish capitalism and the unwitting non-Jewish Argentines who were their dupes. Martel completely ignored the interests which had profited the most from the speculation and rampant inflation before 1890 — the native landowners and the British investors. In this manner he found a scapegoat (the ubiquitous Jew) and avoided criticizing the socioeconomic system which was at fault. Indeed, he defended the landed class and distinguished "good"

capital from "evil": respectively, the constructive and benign British influence, and the Jewish monopolizing instinct, which sought to corrupt and control all of society. In other words, capitalism in itself was not bad, only "Jewish capitalism"; the Nazis later would agree with him. La Bolsa contained all the contradictory tenets of radical anti-Semitism. The Jews were capitalists, yet they also were socialists; they formed separate enclaves, but they penetrated all groups and sectors of society; they were bold and cowardly at the same time; they were "rootless" and international in orientation and yet for some obscure reason had chosen Argentina as a center of operations. In general, Martel attributed all Argentine problems to Jews, immigrants, and the weakening of the Argentine "race" brought about by cosmopolitanism, greed, and intermarriage with foreigners. In doing so he foreshadowed later pronouncements of cultural nationalists. Despite its irrationalism and virulent racism, or perhaps because of it, La Bolsa was and remains immensely popular among Argentine readers.¹⁸

Rojas did not share Martel's violent attitudes toward the Jews and did not attack them for their alleged venality or economic prowess. Nevertheless, his viewpoint illustrated the fact that anti-Semitism in twentieth-century Argentina may have owed as much to liberal thought as it did to Catholic, if not more. His remarks on the Jews in La restauración nacionalista were inspired by a newspaper campaign in 1908 against the JCA schools in Entre Ríos and the province of

Buenos Aires. La Prensa and La Nación, as well as Argentine educational authorities, charged that the JCA schools emphasized Hebrew and Jewish studies to the exclusion of Spanish and Argentine subjects. After his investigation of the Entre Ríos schools, Ernesto Bavio, an inspector for the national board of education, declared that they were agents of foreignization, as none of the JCA teachers knew Spanish. La Prensa blamed the JCA rather than the Jewish immigrants, claiming that the organization administered the schools and ruled the colonies as if the latter belonged to it, rather than to Argentina.¹⁹

Rojas added to the controversy by stating that while in principle the Jewish schools were no different from those of other immigrant communities, in actuality they posed additional dangers to the nation. If they did not owe allegiance to another nation, they did, however, serve a "nomadic Church and a theocratic family," the latter of which would be difficult to incorporate into Argentine life, as criollo families were Catholic or nonreligious. By inculcating its students with Jewish learning, the schools fostered a sense of separatism in first-generation Argentines, who as a result chose to be Jews rather than Argentines "in complete communion with the people and the soil" of their birthplace. This separatism could inspire anti-Jewish feeling among native Argentines, ending the spirit of religious and political tolerance which until then, according to Rojas, had characterized the latter.²⁰

One could criticize these remarks on a variety of grounds, the first being that they did not coincide with the facts. One could not

fault Rojas, a patriotic citizen of a young country with a heterogeneous population, for being concerned about national unity and identity. But he missed the real heart of the education problem: not whether the immigrant schools were antinational, but whether the public school system was equipped to serve the masses of immigrants, some of whom had settled in zones newly opened to settlement. In general, few public schools existed in the countryside and even fewer in frontier areas, and the provinces of Entre Ríos and Santa Fe, where most of the Jewish colonies were located, could not afford to build more. The JCA schools were established in a void; for this reason, they often received Christian pupils and the support of local governments. Education officials in Entre Ríos refuted Bavio's findings (and even claimed that he never came to their province) and praised the efforts of the JCA educational system to "Argentinize" its pupils, as did some federal authorities. While the quality of Jewish education — as far as Spanish and Argentine culture was concerned — was not the highest, it usually met minimal standards. To have ignored these subjects and encouraged separatism would have contradicted the JCA's assimilationist goals. That the Jews were being absorbed into Argentine rural life was the theme of Alberto Gerchunoff's popular Los gauchos judíos (1910). Still, the separatist stereotype persisted, and the JCA decided to hand over its schools to local boards of education in 1914.²¹

Rojas' statements were also objectionable for reasons other than purely factual. To him, Jews were essentially rootless beings who had

migrated from country to country without forming ties to any. They reserved their allegiance for their religion and ethnicity, an allegiance strengthened by their schools, endogamous marriage patterns, and family life. Being a Jew meant holding this loyalty above all other sentiments, including patriotism, which, at any rate, the "wandering Jew" was not accustomed to feeling. Rojas believed that one could not be a Jew and an Argentine at the same time; one had to choose between them. He did not seem to recognize that his price for assimilation was rejecting one's religion, or that pluralism could coexist with national unity. Evidently only Catholics, Protestants, or nonbelievers could be Argentine, because their religious identity (or lack thereof) would not compete with their nationality.

When Rojas said that there had been no anti-Semitism in the past, he was naive. In fact, a strong undercurrent of anti-Semitism — probably unconscious — lurked beneath his own words, as when he blamed Jews for provoking anti-Jewish sentiments. Although economic considerations did not form an important theme of his work, they were present, and sometimes they were coupled with remarks on Jews, as when Rojas referred to "Jewish and British capitalists," or when he noted that "except for the Jewish banker, abroad . . . they do not even know where the Argentine Republic is."²² These comments were only peripheral to the main threads of the argument; nonetheless they suggest a viewpoint not that distant from Martel's, one in which Jews and finance were commonly linked. The author's concern for protecting Argentine economic

interests against foreign competition has already been cited. To consider "Jewish finance" deleterious to the nation and to perceive the struggle against it as one and the same as the struggle against foreign capital required several additional leaps which Rojas never made, but others later did. La restauración nacionalista illustrated one of the principal shortcomings of Argentine liberalism, one which would carry over into right-wing thought: the desire to forge a firm national identity without tolerating any deviation from the norm. In general, many of the ingredients of counterrevolution were already present in his work.

Other liberals and even the Socialist leader Justo held views similar to those of Rojas on Jewish separatism.²³ However, not all non-Jewish intellectuals or even all the cultural nationalists coincided in these beliefs. A significant but temporary exception (he was rarely content to remain in any position for too long) was Leopoldo Lugones. As this contradictory poet and essayist played an important role in future counterrevolutionary groups, it is worthwhile to linger on his introduction. Lugones was born in 1874 in northwestern Córdoba, of an old upper middle-class family which lost its land and economic security in the depression of 1890. Out of necessity young Lugones went to work in the local government, thus initiating a long career in the public bureaucracy. Somehow he reconciled his livelihood with his lifelong distaste for the bourgeoisie and for government: first, as a Socialist, he despised class rule; as an anarchist, any rule

whatsoever; as an aristocratic liberal, rule of the masses; finally, as an admirer of fascist and military dictatorships, civilian rule. Other constants were his anticlericalism, his aestheticism, his social Darwinism, and his individualism. His faith in the individuals who composed the masses evolved into exaltation of the superior man or men who led them. Belief in the self-determination of all evolved into a justification of the unhindered liberty of the few who merited it.²⁴

In the Jewish newspaper Vida Nuestra, Lugones defended the Jewish schools and insisted that the campaign against them, just as all other anti-Semitic attacks, had originated in a set of falsehoods. The so-called "Jewish question," he asserted, was not the creation of the Jews per se but of fanatics of all religions and of tyrants who despised the Jews' love of freedom and persecuted them for it. The Jews never formed attachments to the countries where they knew only oppression, but they cherished the lands where they knew liberty. For this reason there was no Jewish question in the United States or England.²⁵

Lugones' enlightened attitudes toward Jews, however, did not prevent him from delivering a series of lectures in 1913, during his aristocratic liberal phase, on the gaucho and how he exemplified the national character. He also defended the old elitist society by attacking the democratic system and praising the political class for having generously allowed it to come into existence against its own interests.²⁶ The popularity of these lectures, later published under

the title of El payador, reflected the extent to which cultural nationalism and intertwined xenophobic and antimodernist sentiments had permeated the political class.

At the same time hostility against the largely foreign proletariat was also growing; La restauración nacionalista appeared during the period of Falcón's assassination, labor disruptions, and violence which led up to the centennial. The question of maintaining order in the face of lower-class discontent preoccupied the political class. Officially inspired repression was one answer; another was vigilante action against the working class. But these alone did not neutralize the labor movement and leftist groups. Some businessmen, political leaders, clergymen, and intellectuals were also formulating other possible solutions to the social question, ones which entailed organization (of workers, employers, or both), limited recognition of workers' rights, universal suffrage, economic nationalism, adherence to Catholicism, and social welfare. These various schemes differed markedly but did share one trait: opposition to the main goals of the radical left --- an autonomous labor movement, the workers' appropriation of the means of production, and the creation of a classless society.

One of these envisioned solutions was mobilizing businessmen and factory owners in defense of their interests against workers. By organizing, these groups responded not only to practical necessity but to ideological imperative. Their world view, buttressed by their

economic positions, influenced them to visualize human beings as individuals rather than classes, as in the case of the proletariat. Of course they saw distinctions between men; some were more qualified to assume high responsibilities than others. That was why workers were at one end and owners at the other end of the scale. Until recently, relations between employers and laborers had been harmonious, according to the entrepreneurial viewpoint. The former were free to hire and fire workers and to set working conditions. If laborers were unsatisfied, or if they faced hardships, they sought aid from the patrón. But now things had changed. Under the influence of foreign ideas, the workers believed that their interests were directly opposed to those of the capitalists and could only be achieved through struggling together against the latter. Perhaps this was true in Europe, thought the entrepreneurs, but in Argentina it was not the case. Here the industries were young and insecure, beleaguered by high costs, low tariff protection, and foreign competition. Labor demands and strikes added to these costs and made it difficult to stay in business. If industries and businesses shut down, the workers would starve. Thus their natural interest coincided with that of the employers: to sustain or raise production. If workers would accept this fact, management would do its part by insuring equitable salaries, since reaching its goal depended heavily on the workers' wellbeing.²⁷ Many workers refused to recognize "reality," however; so employers resolved to follow their example and organize their own unions.

The employers associations used any means at their disposal to destroy the labor movement and create a situation in which they could deal with the workers on an individual basis. Some of their methods included simple nonrecognition of unions, lockouts, blacklisting of union members, hiring strikebreakers and organizing them into "yellow" unions. One employers association which carried on these kinds of activities was the Sociedad Unión Protectora de Trabajo Libre, founded in 1905 by six railroad companies and a group of maritime firms. Since anarchist activities focused on the port, so did those of the Sociedad, which soon spread to the ports of Rosario, Bahía Blanca, and other cities. The Sociedad issued formal regulations on the hiring, firing, and working conditions of the laborers who constituted its pool of strikebreakers, available for use by member firms. The Sociedad also provided its own internal arbitration commissions and mutual aid facilities for laborers. Its principal concern, however, was not insuring the welfare of its labor pool but breaking strikes or, as the Sociedad put it, protecting "free labor."²⁸

The Sociedad was the ancestor of another employers association, the Asociación Nacional de Trabajo. As in the case of the Sociedad, representatives from maritime houses and suppliers for ships were instrumental in setting up the Asociación. The huge waterfront and railroad strikes of 1917 and 1918, as well as the Russian revolution, impelled the organization of maritime firms to conceive of a new body to replace the Sociedad. This organization would be broader in scope

than the latter; it would defend the "industrial and commercial rights" of all businesses, not only those associated with transportation and the ports. Pedro Christophersen, a Norwegian estanciero, owner of a shipping firm, and head of the stock exchange, presided over a meeting held in May 1918 to consider the proposal. The assembled businessmen resolved to create the Asociación Nacional de Trabajo, which would be composed of a junta led by the president of the stock exchange and delegates from the main groups of commercial and industrial enterprises. One of the Asociación's principal aims would be to secure good salaries, old age pensions, insurance against illness and injury, and general improvements in "moral" and material standards for workers. Second on the list of goals, but surely first in terms of priorities, was the Asociación's intention of protecting the employers' right to freely hire and dismiss laborers.²⁹ Although not mentioned at this time, another important goal would be to lobby for business interests with government officials.

In July 1918 the Asociación was born. Among the founding members were the shipping firms; five railroad companies; wool and grain exporters; coastal shipping, port-carting, and consignees associations, the local tram company and electric utilities; various organizations of import-export firms and food-processing companies; the Unión Industrial Argentina, and the Sociedad Rural Argentina. The Asociación represented the union of landed and business interests, for the elaboration and export of agricultural products depended upon a compliant labor force

in the factories, railroad yards, and docks. After it issued formal statutes, the Asociación received juridical recognition from the Yrigoyen government in December 1918.³⁰

Before the formation of the employers associations, a social movement with a somewhat related orientation had come into existence — the Catholic. With the anticlerical measures of the 1880's, clerics and laymen organized a movement in defense of Catholic rights and principles which affected the social sphere as well. In 1882 a group of Catholic intellectuals and statesmen founded the newspaper La Unión to carry its campaign against laicism to porteño readers, while several new Catholic papers took the same message to the provinces. Catholic opposition to the restriction of Church privileges in education and marriage crystallized in the press, in Congress, in a newly-organized Catholic party — the Unión Católica, and in the Asociación Católica de Buenos Aires. The latter had been in existence since 1877, but the recent spurt of Catholic activism and its new president, José Manuel Estrada, revitalized it. Some of its other prominent members included Emilio Lamarca, Pedro Goyena, Tristán Achával Rodríguez, and Santiago O'Farrell.³¹ Estrada, Goyena, and Lamarca have already been introduced; Achával was a national deputy from Córdoba, and O'Farrell was the scion of an old, landed Irish-Argentine family from Buenos Aires province. A lawyer, financier, and railroad executive, O'Farrell participated for many years in Irish, religious, and political circles and became a national deputy and a member of the Liga Patriótica Argentina.³²

These and other activists gathered at the First National Congress of Argentine Catholics in 1884 to decide on a variety of political matters, including the formation of the Unión Católica. They did not, however, neglect social issues. Even before the Congress the idea of forming Catholic mutual aid societies for workers had been conceived, but during the meetings it received additional support. Delegates resolved to establish, among other things, local employment services and "workers social circles" at the district or parochial level.³³ The organization of these circles, however, did not really get under way until the 1890's, when Father Federico Grote assumed charge of this task.

Before discussing Grote's work, it would be useful to ask why the Catholics manifested interest in the social question at this juncture, before the major political parties did. Religious organizations are devoted to the welfare of their flocks, but this devotion often has been restricted to spiritual and not material welfare, although the Church has always been involved in charitable activities. Social Catholicism, or the worldwide movement concerned with the wellbeing of the masses, was the Church's response to the challenges posed by modernization, liberalism, the labor movement, and new leftist doctrines. Rationalization of agriculture, industrialization, and urbanization had changed the landscape and social structure of much of Europe and had created a glaring eyesore: a proletariat which lived and worked in conditions akin to slavery. Meanwhile liberal governments

had chipped away at the privileges of the Church, which they regarded as an obstacle to progress. Liberals and workers coincided in their anticlericalism or religious indifference (if in nothing else), and Catholic congregations diminished everywhere. The workers' adherence to trade unions, socialism, and anarchism eventually pushed the Church into action. While the Church had a stake in the status quo, it had no particular affinity for laissez faire economics and hence could support paternalist legislation, working class organization for strictly economic ends, and other humanitarian measures with less qualms than its liberal foes. Pope Leo XIII recognized this and called upon Catholics to help the proletariat in his encyclical Rerum Novarum in 1891.

A member of the Redemptorist Order, Father Grote arrived in Argentina from Germany in 1884. The example of Bishop Ketteler of Mainz (1850-1877), who had supported state intervention in the social sphere, influenced him heavily, as did that of Leo XIII later on. Noting the plight of the immigrants, he and other Redemptorists tried to help porteño working-class families and in the process divest them of social resentment. Although some members of the order protested that their function was spiritual, not social, Grote insisted that his was, too, and proceeded with his work, founding a Círculo de Obreros in 1892. Others were founded throughout the country until by 1912, when Grote retired as spiritual director of the Federación de los Círculos de Obreros, there were seventy-seven with about 23,000 members.³⁴

According to Grote, his main purpose was not to insure the material wellbeing of the workers, important though this was, but to find new means of winning souls for the Church at a time when religious indifference kept people from responding to traditional ones. He aimed to save them from the deleterious influences of positivism, liberalism, and especially socialism, and to bring them under the benevolent wing of the Church. Since he viewed the socialist concept of class struggle as the principal foe, Grote did not want the Círculos to become combative arms of the proletariat. Furthermore, he hoped to attract and educate the rich as well as the poor and to encourage them to work together, thus combatting the idea of a society rigidly divided into two implacable enemies. For these reasons, the Círculos opened their doors to professionals, businessmen, employers, and workers³⁵ and resembled medieval guilds rather than unions. Mutual aid, education, the formation of savings and consumption cooperatives and employment services, lobbying for social legislation — these were the Círculos' main tasks, and their adherents from the political class boosted these efforts.

In 1898 the Círculos held the First Catholic Workers Congress, whose delegates began a long campaign in favor of laws granting Sunday rest and regulating child and female labor, among others. Catholics and Socialists struggled to secure passage of these two measures, which occurred in 1905 and 1907, respectively; for example, the Catholic deputy Santiago O'Farrell and the Socialist deputy Alfredo L. Palacios,

who had belonged to a Círculo, were instrumental in pushing through the Sunday rest law.³⁶

These were not the only occasions when Catholics and Socialists allied to pass social legislation. Catholic deputies, in particular O'Farrell, Arturo M. Bas, and Juan F. Cafferata, all of whom were intimately involved in the Círculos de Obreros, sponsored bills which received Socialist support. When Joaquín V. González, Roca's interior minister, drafted his proposal for a national labor code, he consulted not only with Socialists Enrique del Valle Iberlucea, Manuel Ugarte, Augusto Bunge, and Leopoldo Lugones but with Father Grote and leading members of the Círculos. Businessmen, industrialists, Socialists, and anarchists, however, opposed the bill when it was considered in 1904: the last two groups because of its provisions on excluding immigrants with radical backgrounds and restricting labor activities. The anarchists also condemned it as yet another government action designed to limit individual and collective liberty. The bill went down to defeat.³⁷

While Catholics pursued their goals in Congress, Grote and some of his colleagues recognized that a new organization was required to supplement the task of the Círculos by dealing solely with workers. Thus the Liga Democrática Cristiana was born in 1902. Its main job was to form Catholic-inspired labor unions, although the Círculos had offered some facilities to unions, arbitrated in conflicts, and supported some of the workers' demands. The goals of these confessional

organizations were strictly economic and "moral" in nature, to be attained through legal, nonviolent means; they explicitly disavowed sentiments against private property and the constitutional authorities. The Liga established several unions, such as those of dock workers and weavers, which altogether attracted 5000 members. However, its very success doomed its efforts, for employers teamed up with other Catholic activists to form yellow unions and weaken the Catholic ones.³⁸ In this case, as in many others, businessmen obstinately refused to concede anything to labor, even the limited types of gains which the Liga Democrática Cristiana supported.

Hindered by the disapproval of many Catholics, including members of the hierarchy, the Liga folded in 1908. Another organization rose to take its place, the Unión Democrática Cristiana, but the archbishop ordered it dissolved. Meanwhile a more successful venture was launched in 1908 — the Liga Social Argentina. Its president and founder was Emilio Lamarca; its leading members included O'Farrell, Alejandro E. Bunge, and Fathers Gustavo J. Franceschi and Miguel de Andrea.³⁹ President of the central junta of the Círculos de Obreros from 1912 to 1916, Bunge also enjoyed a long career as an economist, statistician, and astute critic of Argentine development. From 1918 to 1943, year of his death, he tirelessly studied economic and social problems and publicized the need for industrialization and reform in his influential Revista de Economía Argentina, always from a rational but conservative viewpoint. His Catholicism, as well as his experience working for the

federal labor department, had helped to awaken his social conscience yet temper it with paternalism.⁴⁰

Franceschi and De Andrea had worked with Grote in the Círculos and had been heavily influenced by him. Although he continued to participate in Social Catholic organizations, Franceschi became best known for his influence on young intellectuals through his activities in Catholic student groups and publishing. Throughout the 1930's he edited the important Catholic right-wing literary and political review, Criterio, which will be discussed later on. At the time of his participation in the Liga Social, De Andrea was already a Catholic leader of considerable stature. Although in the 1940's and 1950's many Argentines considered him the spokesman for democracy against Perón, before then his main battles were against the left (the two stands were not completely inconsistent). His lifelong distaste for radicalism and sympathy for corporatism would lead him, along with other priests of similar persuasions, to the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

The organization to which these men belonged, the Liga Social Argentina, had broader and vaguer objectives than the Círculos or the Liga Democrática Cristiana. Modeled upon the German Volksverein, dedicated to educating Catholics on the social question and defending the Church, the Liga aimed to

sustain the Christian organization of society, combat all errors or subversive tendencies in the social plane, and instruct the people on the problems and questions which arise from modern development, in order to . . . intellectually and economically lift up all the professions and social classes.⁴¹

It hoped to accomplish these goals through publications, conferences, and its own library system. By 1914 the Liga had 5743 members and 184 centers all over the country; between 1909 and 1919, the year of its demise, its orators delivered 4000 speeches.

A unique aspect of the Liga Social was its interest in the countryside. Its rural organizers, in particular José Serralunga Langhi, who later joined the Liga Patriótica Argentina, tried to convince small farmers to set up cooperatives. Serralunga believed that Argentine agriculture was plagued by extreme individualism and lack of government interest or planning. The farmers' most pressing needs were additional sources of credit and irrigation, and both could be obtained by means of cooperatives. Agriculturalists would pool their resources in the latter and would borrow money from them for building irrigation works, buying seeds or machinery, or whatever was lacking. Raising money through the cooperatives presented several advantages; capital produced by the land would return to the land and there would be no need to resort to foreign sources of capital. The rural cooperatives would help exclude foreign capital from local interests and reduce the profits of foreign companies made by feeding off local wealth and remitted abroad. In order to increase the population of Argentina and develop the nation economically, it was necessary to settle remaining government-owned lands and end the latifundia system. The cooperatives, according to Serralunga, could expedite this process.⁴²

Eventually over thirty cooperatives were established. It was no coincidence that the year of greatest Catholic rural activity was the one which witnessed the tenant farmer strikes and the rise of the Federación Agraria Argentina. Fearful of anarchist-led social upheaval in the countryside — although at this moment their worries were groundless — the Liga Social organized a Catholic Rural Congress in November 1912, just after the end of the strikes. The Catholic cooperative movement, however, made little inroad against the twin obstacles of campesino fatalism and indifference.

Meanwhile De Andrea was turning his efforts toward one sector of the population which Argentine Social Catholics had hitherto neglected. If anarchism and other destructive doctrines had captured the minds of numerous males, he believed that at least the women had remained immune to their ruinous appeal. As wives and mothers, women throughout the ages had concerned themselves with maintaining the family and inculcating children with the virtues of obedience, patriotism, and faith in God. Their conservative and educational role and their image of love and self-sacrifice were similar to the role and image of the Church itself. Even the female members of the proletariat, De Andrea, thought, might help the Church to restore order in society and bring sheep back to the fold. This conception of women as the natural allies of the Church and the right wing would permeate the latter's future thought and action, and while De Andrea had not invented it, he was perhaps the first Argentine to fully utilize it.

He began to put this belief into practice in 1908, when he founded the Federación de las Congregaciones de Hijas de María. The Hijas de María was a patriotic group made up of the descendants of women who had donated their jewels to the Argentine independence cause — descendants by blood, name, or national spirit. This was by no means the first Catholic women's organization, but it was the first to actively oppose the left. As the centennial of independence approached, many feared that the anarchists would disrupt the scheduled ceremonies. Unwilling to allow this to happen, on May 21, 1910, De Andrea convoked the Hijas de María at the downtown church of Nuestra Señora de la Merced, the patron saint of the Argentine army, for a mass in celebration of independence. After the mass he led the women, joined by members of other prestigious female groups such as the Sociedad de Beneficiencia, on a patriotic march from La Merced to the tomb of San Martín. Singing the national anthem, the enthusiastic demonstrators symbolized the depth of Argentine resistance to anarchism and served as an example for men to follow. Follow they did; just before May 25, De Andrea marched with a huge crowd of young men from the Plaza del Congreso to the Plaza de Mayo. There the flag-waving youths swore never to allow the anarchist banner to rise over the streets of Buenos Aires.⁴³ It is not unlikely that some of these young men belonged to the vigilante groups which struck the Jewish and working-class neighborhoods a few nights later. At any rate, De Andrea continued his efforts to organize women, together with other priests

such as Franceschi, who in 1916 established the Centro Blanca de Castilla, dedicated to solving the problems of working women. The year 1917 witnessed the founding of the first Catholic female labor union, the Federación de Asociaciones Católicas de Empleadas, and others followed.⁴⁴

From his activities during the centennial, De Andrea realized that social Catholic teachings would have to be united with nationalism. God and fatherland were seemingly inseparable; the Church's enemies and aims were the same as those of the nation, for the latter's soul was profoundly Christian.⁴⁵ This viewpoint not only tended to deprive the few non-Christian Argentines (i.e. Jews) of their nationality and strip the Church of its transcendent, universal mission, but would prove ultimately antidemocratic. In a sermon he gave in 1913, De Andrea welcomed the advent of democracy, but he warned that this form of government carried with it the seeds of danger. Anarchy would accompany the fall of social and political barriers to the masses if the practice of Christian morality did not temper democratic rule. To him, Christian morality meant individual sacrifice in emulation of Christ on earth.

As he had explained in an earlier sermon, the Christian idea of work entailed pain and suffering. Laborers commonly visualized work as a humiliating consequence of their social inferiority. Many believed that once their standing improved, work would become pleasurable. "The people who let themselves be dominated by this notion of

labor, will always . . . be seeking increases in pleasure and salary." The true Christian envisioned labor as the legacy of man's fall from grace: something which man was forced to patiently endure and by doing so redeem himself spiritually. Far from being inferior, the common laborers occupied a dignified and hallowed position in the social hierarchy, for Jesus had been one of them and had been venerated by rich and poor alike. Workers should not strive to change the natural order of things; to do so would be un-Christian and immoral. Instead, they should content themselves with improving their circumstances within the existing order and receiving charity from the rich, which was the latter's duty to extend to them.

The type of democracy De Andrea envisioned was a very limited one. The masses could not assert themselves, for to do so would evince greed. His conservative and paternalistic sentiments on democracy, labor, and maintaining the social status quo demonstrated the chasm that lay between the Social Catholic movement and those who sought to radically transform society. Nevertheless, his five decades of accomplishments attested to a genuine social concern. Furthermore, despite the conservatism of his program, many priestly colleagues and members of the political class viewed it myopically as radical, unnecessary, or both. In prewar Argentina, interest in solving social problems was minimal. There was widespread alarmism over leftist inroads into the working class and repression of the labor movement, but few concrete measures to alleviate the ills which spawned radicalism.

The laws on Sunday rest and child and female labor were the major pieces of social legislation passed at this time, and even these moderate laws were not well enforced. Aside from these laws, however, another step forward was made during these years — the creation of the national labor department in 1907, which gathered information on the state of the working class, formulated legislative proposals, and helped arbitrate disputes between labor and capital.

Social legislation received support from a small sector within the political class — the reformers. Their concern over the social question was tempered by a belief in the existing social system; indeed, the realization that maintaining the latter hinged on solving the former was often their prime motivation. Many were also influenced by their Catholicism, as in the case of the Catholic deputies, or by simple nostalgia for traditional society, in which the extremes of wealth and poverty had not been as evident. They idealized the days when the great haciendado's lifestyle differed relatively little from the peon's, and the latter was bound to the former through ties of mutual assistance, loyalty, and compadrazco. This paternalist viewpoint characterized not only some figures of officialdom, such as González or Cafferata, but even some of the members of the Radical party, particularly its leader Yrigoyen. Before Yrigoyen became president, however, his party manifested its concern for the masses principally by distributing so-called "Radical bread," not by publicizing a specific reform program. After he came to office he did sponsor some bills in

Congress and converse with labor leaders, but the main reform measures of Radical administrations were aimed not at the largely foreign-born proletariat but at the criollo middle class, which formed the party's constituency.

Interest in the social question was manifested in different ways. Some reformers worked within formal bodies of government, such as Congress or the various ministries, drafting legislative proposals and attempting to secure their approval, usually unsuccessfully. Others in their professional roles as judges, lawyers, and legal scholars studied social conditions and constructed new interpretations of laws. Here one may cite a variety of works, among others: Manuel Gálvez's La trata de blancas (1904) and La inseguridad de la vida obrera (1913); and for urban social problems was reflected by his doctoral Ernesto Quesada's Teoría y práctica en la cuestión obrera (1906); and Antonio Dellepiane's Estudios de filosofía jurídica y social (1907). The first two authors have already been mentioned, while Dellepiane was a well-known professor and historian who later became head of the Museo Histórico Nacional. Gálvez and Dellepiane were prominent in future counterrevolutionary circles, the latter as a member of the Liga Patriótica Argentina. Also, through their duties in the national labor department or other government agencies, their collaboration with private institutions, or out of sociological interest, some researchers studied the condition of the masses. Early works of Alejandro Bunge fit in this category, as did Juan A. Alsina's

El obrero en la República Argentina (1905) and the famous Informe sobre el estado de las clases obreras en el interior de la República (1904) by Juan Bialet Massé.

One private institution which carried out this kind of research was the Museo Social Argentina. The Museo was established in 1911 as an "institute of information, studies and social actions" and was incorporated into the University of Buenos Aires in 1927. Its founder and longtime president was Tomás Amadeo, scion of a prestigious family whose Genoese forebear was one of the original members of the Sociedad Rural. A leading agronomist, estanciero, and businessman, Amadeo headed several professional organizations and served in government and international agencies. His abiding concern for agrarian reform and for urban social problems was reflected by his doctoral thesis on trade unionism and many subsequent works on these topics. Amadeo also participated actively in politics as a member of the P.D.P. In many ways he exemplified the best that the political class could offer: scholarship, involvement in community affairs, genuine interest in the welfare of the masses, and even in democracy. Yet these excellent qualities did not keep him from joining the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

Inspired by similar efforts in Spain and France, the individuals who formed the Museo believed that Argentina needed institutions to deal with the social questions.⁴⁶ These persons represented such groups as the Círculos de Obreros, the Jockey Club, the Círculo de

Armas, and the Sociedad Industrial Argentina, which also extended funds and assistance to the Museo. Many distinguished intellectuals and political figures belonged to the Museo or simply collaborated in its research efforts, including men who were tied to the right: Amadeo, Emilio Lamarca, General Proto Ordóñez, Manuel A. Montes de Oca, Eleodoro Lobos, Joaquín de Anchorena, Carlos Ibarguren, and Gustavo Martínez Zurviría. All but the last two joined the Liga Patriótica Argentina, and Anchorena, one of the wealthiest estancieros and an industrialist, also served as the president of the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo. Ibaruguren and Martínez Zuviría will be discussed later on.

According to Amadeo, all the Museo's forces were directed toward social reform and forging solidarity between all human beings "through the economic perfecting of the proletarian classes and the moral perfecting of all the social classes." The Museo also entertained the nationalist goal of tying immigrants firmly to Argentina, but this nationalism, he asserted, was rational and nonexclusive. Although the Museo was not designed to solely help the workers, Amadeo insisted that solving their problems was essential to the wider goal of social harmony. Among members of the political class he was unique in claiming that the "workers' question" did not represent an exotic foreign import irrelevant to Argentine conditions; he admitted that inflation, unemployment, and poverty were realities there as well as in Europe. His view of anarchism as "a social disease suffered by a nucleus,

unfortunately numerous, of degenerates and criminals," however, was not as refreshing. Still, Amadeo stressed the need for research and not repression. The Museo would bring together specialists from a variety of disciplines to contribute to the following objectives: the centralization of all types of information on the socioeconomic conditions of Argentina and also of other countries, research directed toward facilitating rapid development of Argentine resources, and synthesizing and publishing the results of this research.

To achieve these objectives, the Museo sent research teams to the interior and to Europe, established a library and archives, held conferences, encouraged social projects, and published a bulletin and other works. The Boletín del Museo Social Argentino included regular sections each month on social legislation at home and abroad, education, strikes, economic statistics, reviews of related books, and articles by the best Argentine social scientists. Common subjects for articles included hygiene, the cost of living, feminism, technical and rural education, immigration, agricultural development, insurance for workers, and mutual aid societies. The Boletín was the finest journal of its kind in prewar Argentina; indeed, it faced no real competition until the appearance of the Revista de Economía Argentina in 1918. Its editors claimed that it was an objective source, designed to provide information and not to take dogmatic stands on controversial issues. Within the not-too-rigid confines of its conservative reformism, it kept to these rules. To the Museo's credit it permitted

one Socialist, Alfredo L. Palacios, to join, and the Boletín included articles, speeches, and legislative proposals by him and other Socialists such as Mario Bravo and Augusto Bunge.

A short article on the housing shortage serves as a good example of the Museo's typical viewpoint and its limitations. According to the anonymous author, in Argentina there was no caste society and there was no reason why any should exist in the future, given the opportunities for upward mobility. However, he observed that one proposed solution to the housing crisis would pave the way toward the creation of rigid caste barriers: the erection of buildings to be occupied solely by workers. This would constitute the first step toward the formation of worker neighborhoods (which, in fact, already existed) and would in turn

signify the organization of a social class apart, strongly delineated, weighted down by caste fatalism. And this flows into another fearful fatalism: the formation of a stable proletarian mass, dense, compact, nest of rebelliousness and constant threats of conflagrations.

The author concluded that it was necessary to lower rents and insure that all families had decent homes. But the housing question would have to be studied carefully from an "Argentine point of view," so that the approach finally chosen would not lead to further problems (i.e. the awakening of class consciousness), such as those which had plagued Europe.⁴⁷

The housing crisis was severe -- a fact illustrated by the tenant strike of 1907, opportunities for mobility for manual laborers were scarce, and the proletariat was already residentially segregated for the most part. Still, the issue of class preoccupied the author far more than the need to provide adequate living conditions for workers. Examining a problem from the "Argentine point of view" became a synonym for antileftism. The Museo's humanitarianism was heavily tempered with distaste for class conflict, and the latter took precedence over the former.

If the Museo opposed the workers perpetuating themselves as a class, it did not oppose workers organizations per se. Most of its collaborators advocated the formation of mutual aid societies, cooperatives, and even unions for workers and other social groups, as long as their ends were limited to specific economic goals and did not include the restructuring of society. Mutualism in particular received its endorsement, and its leading spokesman within the Museo and the political class was Carlos Ibarguren. Member of an illustrious salteña family whose roots in Argentina dated back to the seventeenth century, Ibarguren was tied to the Generation of Eighty and the political elite through his father, a national senator, supreme court justice, and close friend of Roca, and his relatives the Uriburus -- José E. Uriburu having been president from 1895 to 1898. Despite these connections and the government positions he held before 1916, Ibarguren never identified completely with the régimen and frequently

criticized what he considered its sensualism, skepticism, and materialism. In contrast he admired José Manuel Estrade and other Catholic leaders and the revolutionaries of 1890.

Even as a youth Ibarguren was concerned with the social problems brought about by modernization. In an article he wrote in 1897, at the age of twenty, he explained the viewpoint of the worker, for whom the liberals' much-vaunted equality did not exist. Even though the old social barriers had fallen, a new upper class had arisen which was worse than the old -- the bourgeoisie; a new type of human being had come into existence who was crueler than the nobleman -- the capitalist. Faced with these enemies, labor had resorted to class struggle.

Ibarguren hoped that the twentieth century and advances in sociology would bring solutions for social problems which would dissuade the proletariat from carrying out a violent revolution.⁴⁸

The twentieth century arrived, unaccompanied by any such breakthrough. Some members of the political class, namely, the Radicals, believed that electoral reform and the implantation of democracy would suffice to heal society's ills. Ibarguren did not share this faith. In a speech in 1912 he declared that legislation would not transform Argentina overnight, for large numbers of voters would not assure the proper functioning of democracy. The influence of social factors on politics was decisive. Democracy would be achieved only when organizations capable of responding to "concrete" and "collective" interests would participate in and succeed each other in government without

upsetting the equilibrium existing between social forces. Many years would pass until this structure was formed, and meanwhile Argentina would be prey to "disoriented oscillation." (Even Ibarguren did not realize how long this process would take.)

A new actor — the proletariat — had entered Argentine society and politics, continued Ibarguren. Justifiably seeking a more equitable distribution of wealth, the workers had banded together. No one had anything to fear from their social and democratic struggle, as long as strong moderate forces operated to halt any possible excesses. In Ibarguren's opinion, unity of the "conservative classes" would be enough to ward off any extremist threat. He believed, however, that this unity was sadly lacking. The real danger did not come from the proletariat itself but from "utopian theories." These could capture the minds of judges and legislators as easily as those of workers, and the former could translate them into imprudent reforms. In contrast, viable change was the product of long social processes.⁴⁹ The "utopian theories" Ibarguren had in mind were those of democracy and Marxism. His conservative view of the evolution of institutions, his ambivalence toward democratic rule, his concern for social equilibrium, and his advocacy of organizations representing "real" (i.e. economic and professional) interests would eventually lead him to corporatism, while his identification of democratic sentiments with extreme leftism would place him firmly in the ranks of counterrevolution.

Ibarguren's speech won praise from President Sáenz Peña, who appointed him to a position in his government. Soon the young salteño

became his Minister of Justice and Public Instruction. Ibarguren commended Sáenz Peña for his efforts to purify the political system, but advised him to bolster the structures of political democracy with those of social democracy.⁵⁰ The first task, as Ibarguren saw it, was to extend government recognition and funding to those institutions which immigrants had created to help each other in case of illness, old age, or death. By supporting these mutual aid societies, the government would be working in harmony with the natural social processes which had brought these institutions into existence, not imposing new artificial ones. In collaboration with a French expert on mutualism whom the Museo had invited to Argentina, and with the President's approval, Ibarguren drafted a law on social assistance and prevision and presented it to Congress in 1913. Essentially the bill enumerated the objectives which mutual aid societies should strive for -- different types of insurance, pensions, and services -- and provided for government supervision and funding. This was the first bill of its kind in Argentina, and it was also the last bill supported by Sáenz Peña, who fell ill immediately after its presentation. A few months later he died, and so did the proposal.

After Sáenz Peña's death, Ibarguren joined Lisandro De la Torre and other friends in the P.D.P. and was instrumental in writing its platform, which included a plank on mutualism. He remained in the P.D.P. after it lost the 1916 election and continued to press for government recognition of mutual aid societies. In 1917 the Museo

planned a Congress of Argentine Mutualism for the following year, and Ibarguren served as its organizer.⁵¹ At the first session of the Congress, held in March 1918, Ibarguren welcomed the Argentine workers of diverse nationalities represented at the proceedings; delegates from approximately 300 labor, employee, professional, and ethnic associations, as well as a few university departments and government agencies were present. The number of workers had grown, he said, in an economic climate dominated by blind individualism and greed, and governments had ignored their problems. Due to a void of social services, workers had turned to each other for help, and their efforts deserved official aid and direction.

The Congress was devoted to studying three different issues: legislation on mutualism, creating a federation of mutual aid societies and their services, and social security. After listening to papers, the delegates decided to form a committee to coordinate relations between the associations and asked the Museo to serve as their lobby in the national Congress. The three days of proceedings met with government indifference and achieved no concrete results.

Ibarguren continued his activities in the Museo and in politics, running unsuccessfully as the P.D.P. candidate for president in 1922. His experience in public life disillusioned him: the failure to pass social legislation, the politicians' greater apparent interest in narrow partisan concerns than in community welfare, the hostility of some of the old political elite toward the P.D.P., the latter's poor

electoral record and the rise of a "demagogic" and incompetent Radical government (particularly after 1928). Combined with his ideological preconceptions, these factors led him to believe that governments of neither the liberal-conservative nor the democratic stripe would ever solve the social question or truly represent the people, and that politics was inevitably corrupt and inefficient. Men like Ibarguren — conservative reformers disgruntled with the ineptitude and inertia of the Argentine political system — rarely turned against the socioeconomic order which had spawned them. They chose the extreme right rather than the left.

One final ingredient of the ideology of social control merits comment: economic nationalism. The latter can be defined as the support of home industries and domestically owned enterprises through such means as tariff protection, along with the desire to regulate or expel foreign capital, all in the interest of national sovereignty. It was not necessarily counterrevolutionary for in Latin America the left has advocated economic nationalism more loudly and consistently than the right. Still, it is not surprising that those who were preoccupied by foreign cultural and ideological influences were also concerned with the inroads of foreign capital. Ricardo Rojas, Manuel Gálvez, and Carlos Ibarguren fell into this category.⁵²

Generally, however, economic nationalism was a right-wing characteristic when it was linked with other attitudes: an excessive preoccupation with national defense or the need for territorial

expansion, chauvinism or racism, antilabor or antileftist sentiments, exaggerated conceptions of the nation's needs and prerogatives, and an irrational, conspiratorial frame of mind. Various manifestations of economic nationalism coupled with these views have already appeared in this narrative; for example, one could cite Martel's La Bolsa or entrepreneurs who believed that labor acted against the interests of national industry. In the first case, Martel praised Argentine landowners as inherently good, not because of what they accomplished in the country but because of the moral and aristocratic values they possessed, and he condemned "Jewish capital" as inherently evil and corrupting. The actual workings of the dependent Argentine economy interested him not a jot; he merely attributed the latter's shortcomings to the influence of Jewish capital, which somehow was allied to Jewish socialism. In the second instance, businessmen believed that in a young developing country, industrial growth depended on a compliant labor force. Therefore they viewed an assertive labor movement as antinational.⁵³

This perception of labor as fundamentally antinational was largely responsible for transforming conservatives into counterrevolutionaries. The ideology of social control which has been described here was a basically conservative one. With the threat of massive social upheaval in 1919, however, this conservative defense of order formed the basis for counterrevolution. Labor disturbances in the early postwar years caused property holders to identify the threat to their position with

a threat to the nation, and they reacted in a violent manner. Their reaction — embodied in the Liga Patriótica Argentina — is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

1

According to H. Stuart Hughes, in Contemporary Europe: A History (2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966), p. 11:

ideology lies somewhere between abstract political and social philosophy and the practical activities of parties and pressure groups. Indeed, it provides the link between the two. An ideology is a general concept of the actual or ideal nature of society that gives meaning and direction to the lives of large groups of people. In one aspect, it is a theory of history, charting the 'inevitable' course of human affairs and assuring its adherents that the future lies with them. . . . From another standpoint, ideology is linked to class, rationalizing and endorsing the aspirations of one social class and attacking those of its enemies. Finally, it may be viewed as a secular cult with its own saints and martyrs, its own creed, and its own system of missionary work, propaganda, and indoctrination. . . . Ideology may be either implicit or explicit.

My choice of terms has also been influenced by Stephan Thernstrom's Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (2nd ed.; New York, 1974), Chapter II, "The Problem of Social Control," pp. 33-56. Also see Mayer, Dynamics of Counterrevolution, for similar discussions.

2

For this general discussion of views on immigration, I am indebted to Gladys S. Onega, La immigración en la literatura argentina, 1880-1910 (Buenos Aires, 1969); Solberg, Immigration and Nationalism; and Juan Jose Sebreli, La cuestión judía en la Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1968), pp. 223-255.

3

See, for example, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, El pensamiento vivo de Sarmiento, ed. by Ricardo Rojas (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1964), pp. 149-208.

4

La Prensa, Dec. 10, 1901. See all of Dec. 1901 and Jan. 1902 for details on the Liga Patriótica Nacional. Also see Caras y Caretas, Dec. 14, 21, 28, 1901 and Jan. 18, 1902. Ironically, the Argentine armed forces were being modernized at this time with German aid. See Warren Schiff, "The Influence of the German Armed Forces and War Industry on Argentina, 1880-1914," Hispanic American Historical Review, LII (Aug. 1972), pp. 436-455.

5

La Prensa, Dec. 19-20, 1901 and Jan. 14, 1902.

6

José F. Uriburu, "Socialismo y defensa nacional," Anales de la Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales, IV (1914), pp. 268-290.

7

Roberto Etchepareborda, "La generación argentina del destino manifiesto: un intento hacia la concreción de la Patria Grande," Investigaciones y Ensayos, XVI (Jan.-June 1974), pp. 111-137; Hobart Spalding, Argentine Sociology from the End of the Nineteenth Century to World War One (Buenos Aires, 1968), p. 10.

8

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Ibid., pp. 229-230.

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On the Congress, see "Congreso de la Mutualidad," Boletín Mensual del Museo Social Argentino, VII (1918), pp. 5-379; La Prensa, Mar. 24-27, 1918.

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CHAPTER III
THE RISE OF THE LIGA PATRIÓTICA ARGENTINA

All the ingredients of counterrevolutionary thought were already present in the prewar period in Europe and in the Americas, including Argentina, although the specific conditions which inspired them differed from place to place. A catalyst, however, was required to act upon these ingredients and convert them into action. The universal political, economic, and social crisis at the end of World War I served as this catalyst, traumitizing people from a variety of backgrounds and pushing them into the forces of counterrevolution.

During the years immediately following World War I, Europe was the scene of convulsion. The demands of war, the massive destruction of lives and property, and the frustrations of peacemaking took their toll on the political, social, and economic structures of the combatant nations. Thrones toppled and the old European empires splintered into new republics lacking firm national identities and experience in self-government. The Bolshevik takeover seemed to herald a frightening new era in world history: that of the socialist revolution.

Meanwhile inflation and unemployment greeted the veterans returning from the front and created hardship throughout Europe. Inspired by events in Russia, workers struck, rioted, and occupied factories, while peasants seized landed estates. The specter of

revolution was transformed into reality: in communist form, as in Germany and Hungary, or in nationalist form, as in Turkey. All over Europe groups arose to defend the status quo against threats — real or imagined — from the left. Even in the United States, a wartime legacy of hyperbolic patriotism and a series of strikes combined to promote an almost hysterical fear of bolshevism. Organizations such as the American Legion and the Ku Klux Klan gave voice to this mood of alarm.

Argentina had not been a belligerent in World War I. Tied through bonds of trade, investment, culture, and ethnicity to Europe, however, it existed within and was conditioned by the climate which the war had created. Thus Argentina also experienced its share of economic dislocation, labor disturbances, and revolutionary stirrings. From 1913 to 1917 the nation suffered through a severe depression, probably worse than that of the 1930's.¹ On the one hand, wartime shortages of imported consumer goods had stimulated industrial growth, but on the other hand, the latter was hampered by the lack of new investment and the inability to import machines, fuel, and primary materials. Construction and most branches of industry slumped during the war years, only to begin a slow recovery in 1918. From 1914 to 1918 the cost of living in Buenos Aires climbed 71 percent (inflation being particularly severe between 1916 and 1918), while salaries fell 38 percent.² Thus, urban workers faced a huge gap between salaries and the spiraling prices of necessity items, or, at worst, unemployment.

Bleak conditions also prevailed in the countryside. Grain prices jumped during the war, but lack of cargo space and shortages of machinery and other essential items caused grain exports to decline, resulting in acreage reductions. After the war, grain exports revived briefly, but with world overproduction sank again. Prices for livestock and livestock products shot up during the war, and as Argentina was closer to Europe than was Australia, its main competitor, the increasing transportation costs worked in its favor. Meat and wool exports soared and the ranching interests profited enormously. But overseas demand declined after the war, and the prices and sales of livestock products fell. These conditions, combined with the rising cost of living, spelled low wages and unemployment for landless rural workers in the littoral region and in Patagonia and high indebtedness and eviction rates for tenant farmers in the grain zone. The mood of large landowners in the early 1920's was one of grave anxiety.

Other groups were also apprehensive over the social and economic climate. As dependent on the world market as the rest of society, the urban middle and upper classes were not immune to the effects of inflation and depression. The rising cost of living affected all consumers, while the slump in commerce and industry had adverse consequences for businessmen and their employees. Although landowners had enjoyed large profits, they had not invested them in industry, partly because they may have viewed the wartime shortages of consumer

goods as temporary, partly because of the difficulty in importing industrial plant, and mostly because it did not occur to them to invest in industry when other lucrative and more traditional investment opportunities were available — namely, government paper, bonds, and treasury notes. The lack of industrial growth limited the employment opportunities for the middle class, which was already restricted by economic dependency.

The news of radicalism abroad served as further cause for alarm among the middle and upper classes. According to David Rock, the European revolutions had a greater effect on them than on the lower class.³ Economic difficulties were bad enough, but the threat of bolshevism in Argentina was even more fearful. The increased momentum of labor activity seemed to indicate the gravity of this threat. When the economy plunged to the depths, labor remained silent. Once the first signs of recovery appeared, however, workers reorganized and resorted to strikes. The number of strikes and strikers increased from 80 and 24,200 in 1916 to 367 and 309,000 in 1919, respectively.⁴ The strikes reflected not only the workers' economic dissatisfaction but the growth of unions (particularly those affiliated with F.O.R.A. IX) and of labor confidence, inspired by the success of the Russian revolution. By the beginning of 1919, F.O.R.A. IX claimed 83,000 members, or about 16 percent of the labor force in the capital; by December its membership grew to 24 percent.⁵ Even so, the large majority of workers remained unattached to any union.

Yrigoyen's reaction to labor problems varied from that of his predecessors in office.⁶ On the one hand, Radicalism was anything but radical on the social question. On the other hand, Yrigoyen favored the ideal of social harmony and fostered the role of class arbiter for the state, especially when these positions translated into political gains for his party. In order to steal votes from the Socialists, Yrigoyen usually limited his support of workers to those of the federal capital. He only dealt with the syndicalists, who constituted a large body of potential voters because they tended to be native-born and, unlike the anarchists, did not necessarily oppose participation in elections. The Radicals drafted a labor code similar to the one proposed by Joaquín V. González, but it died in Congress in 1921. Other social measures favored by the U.C.R., however, did go into effect, such as the pension plans for railroad men and bank and public service employees.

Government support for labor, however, was usually restricted to permitting its representatives access to the President or his ministers, who listened sympathetically and occasionally offered to arbitrate or agreed not to use the police against strikers. Still, in this limited and largely symbolic way Yrigoyen gave the workers more recognition than had past presidents, and his more even-handed approach to conflicts between capital and labor annoyed important businessmen. Their distrust for the Radical regime and their hostility to strikers had stimulated the formation of the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo in

1918. These two stances would also influence the rise of the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

If Yrigoyen did little to aid urban workers, he also failed to alleviate discontent in the countryside.⁷ Unable to pay their rents, tenant farmers went out on strike throughout the grain zone in April 1917, duplicating their actions of 1912. The Radical governors of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe ordered the arrest of striking farmers, the deportation of agitators, and the harassment of the F.A.A. As a result of these measures and the brief revival of prices, the strike ended in failure after two months. The administration also manifested its lack of concern for the farmers' plight in other ways. The agriculture ministry received little funding, and the government paid more attention to expanding its patronage network within it than to the quality of its programs. Farmers complained about this and about the export tax which had been levied in 1918. Furthermore, before 1919 Yrigoyen took little initiative in proposing rural legislation and did not enforce the few laws which existed, thus drawing much criticism from Congress and the press.

Another Yrigoyen stance which proved unpopular was his neutrality. Traditional ties to Western Europe, and particularly cultural ties to France, dictated the pro-Allied sentiments of many Argentines. Despite his nationalist motives, Yrigoyen's seemingly pro-German neutrality struck them as an affront to western civilization. Some Argentines went abroad to help France in the war effort, while others formed

associations supporting the Allies. One of these was the Comité pro Aliados, which attracted 6000 adherents before the 1918 armistice. Young journalists and intellectuals including Alberto Gerchunoff, Ricardo Rojas, Alfredo L. Palacios, and the future nationalists Leopoldo Lugones, Alfonso de Laferrère, Cipriano Pons Lezica, Delfín Medina, Francisco Uriburu, and Mariano Villar Sáenz Peña formed its youth branch, the Comité Nacional de la Juventud, in October 1918.⁸ Closely related to two past presidents, Villar Sáenz Peña, its leader, was a landowner, livestock auctioneer, and former bureaucrat in the federal police. Medina, Uriburu, and Laferrère would shortly thereafter collaborate in the conservative newspaper La Fronda; meanwhile the last two were leaders in the P.D.P. These four men belonged to some of the oldest families in Argentina, although Laferrère's paternal grandfather was a French haciendado.

During the last weeks of the war, the Comité Nacional de la Juventud organized rallies and public speeches in support of the Allies. After the armistice its members were reluctant to disband the group. It became clear that enthusiams for the Allied cause had not been the sole motivating force behind the Comité, for this enthusiasm was part of a wider feeling characteristic of Western youth in the early twentieth century: idealism, desire for participation in a larger cause, elevation of action above rational judgement. The new generation of educated Europeans — and Argentines — was fascinated with the idea of intuition as a complement to intelligence and as the "vital impulse"

behind the unfolding of biological life, introduced by Henri Bergson and other thinkers. Their reading of Friedrich Nietzsche's concepts of the will to power and the "Superman" further heightened their interest in evolution and the dynamism of life.⁹ To the members of the Comité, neutrality had signified cutting Argentines off not only from traditional loyalties, but from an absorbing and uplifting activity in which they longed to participate. Their idealism and vitalism were also tied to patriotism and nationalism; citizenship, in their view, meant belonging to a dynamic entity — the state — which was greater than the sum of his human components. This represented a change from classical liberalism, which held that the nation represented only a pact of individuals.

Some of these young idealists — Lugones being a good example — had previously flirted with socialism and anarchism. Their leftist allegiances fell to the wayside as they became entranced with nationalism, a process speeded by the war. Juan Carulla, a former anarcho-syndicalist and a doctor who served in France, described his shift from left to right in his memoirs. His wartime experiences showed him the dark side of human nature and taught him that humanitarian utopianism was illusory. The only reality was the nation, not abstract notions such as mankind or class. Socialist parties had done nothing to unite and save their countries (Carulla ignored the patriotism of most German and French socialists), and therefore nationalists would have to oppose them. Being a nationalist did not mean giving up all

idea of revolutionary change; the (temporary) alliance between George Sorel's syndicalists and the disciples of Charles Maurras, the French monarchist and philosopher of the right, proved to Carulla that action and revolution could be harnessed to the cause of the nation.¹⁰

With the end to hostilities, the Comité lost an outlet for its members' activism. It searched for another *raison d'être* and soon found it. Ricardo Rojas presented its new orientation as a youth political party to a large audience at the Teatro San Martín on January 2, 1919. According to Rojas, national conditions demanded new responses. The Sáenz Peña law and the election of 1916 had nullified the conservative parties; the U.C.R. was a personalist clique that did not educate the people; the Socialists emphasized materialism to the detriment of the spirit. None of these groups could carry out the essential renovation of society. All points of view were exhausted, and the heterogeneous and "mercantile" population lacked ideals and faith. To rejuvenate Argentina, the moral and material crisis should be studied, education should be revamped, and groups such as the Comité should promote civic action. Rojas declared that the new generation opposed aggressive militarism, a hereditary aristocracy, economic individualism, utilitarian pragmatism, and mechanistic theories of progress, among other things; it did support Wilsonian idealism.¹¹

The reoriented Comité opposed liberalism-conservatism as much as it did "anti-spiritual" Socialism. Not necessarily antidemocratic, its proponents believed in change but of a nonrevolutionary type.

Later in 1919 the Comité's leaders united with other forces against the Radicals and supported the P.D.P. during the 1920 election.¹² The Comité did not achieve fame through electoral achievements, however, but through its activities during the Semana Trágica.

The origins of the Semana Trágica can be traced back to a strike at a large metallurgical factory in the capital which began in December 1918.¹³ The Vasena company hired strikebreakers, and the government assigned policemen, firemen, and soldiers to guard its installations. Throughout December and the first week in January 1919, the security forces and the strikers lurking around the factory regularly exchanged fire. In one of these incidents a policeman died, arousing the anger of his cohorts. The policemen's desire for higher salaries only added to their resentment against workers, who were striving to achieve the same goal with methods the former could not use. This frustration erupted on January 7, when their gunfire killed four laborers (three in their homes) and wounded twenty to forty others; there were no casualties among the security forces.

These unwarranted casualties greatly antagonized the working class. On January 9 about 1000 workers surrounded and attacked the Vasena factory offices. It took the whole day for policemen, firemen, and soldiers to quell the workers, and about 100 injuries resulted from the battle. As another consequence, the head of the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo, Pedro Christophersen, asked the government to intervene. Until this point the Yrigoyen regime had acted with restraint. The

day's events seemed to prove, however, that force was necessary, and General Luis Dellepiane entered the city with troops on his own initiative. Chief of the federal police after Falcón's death till 1912 and founder of the Policía Civil Auxiliar in 1910, Dellepiane had much experience with labor conflict. The government accepted Dellepiane's presence as a fait accompli, named him head of all forces in the capital, and supported the repression which followed.

Meanwhile on the ninth, in response to the plea of the metallurgical union, a general strike began. It did not receive immediate or unqualified support from F.O.R.A. IX and F.O.R.A. V, but it did inspire the adherence of many individual workers, particularly from industry. The general strike was accompanied by giant demonstrations, looting, street fighting, the paralysis of commerce and transportation — and vigilante action against workers, which will be described below. Not long after the troops' arrival on January 9 and 10, the worker-led violence ceased, as did the general strike a few days later. Its ramifications had not been limited to Buenos Aires, for a rash of sympathy strikes hit the interior, especially the provinces of Córdoba, Mendoza, Santa Fe, and Buenos Aires.

Observing the violence and property destruction, many frightened porteños believed that the government had lost control and that revolution was around the corner. Their fears of bolshevism were fed by news of the Spartacist revolt in Germany, which began on January 5, 1919, and rumors of a communist (or maximalist, as it was often called)

plot afoot in Montevideo. The Jews were widely suspected of being bolsheviks, since the overwhelming majority had come from Russia or were of Russian descent. The arrest of forty members of the "first Argentine Soviet," its "president," and its "chief of police," the last two of whom were of Russian-Jewish origin, seemed to confirm the popular identification of Jews with Russians with maximalists and prove the existence of a subversive plot. Later the authorities admitted that the "Soviet" had been imaginary and that its supposed president was a pacifist and a member of a Jewish socialist organization opposed to bolshevism. These disclosures, however, received markedly less publicity than the arrests and came too late to affect popular beliefs.

Not only had there been no maximalist plot, but the general strike had surprised and disconcerted the Socialists and the anarchist and syndicalist organizations. The anarchist metallurgical union had issued the call for a general strike. Once it began, F.O.R.A. V and F.O.R.A. IX formulated terms for ending the strike, which Yrigoyen convinced Vasena to accept. Not all the strikers, however, returned to work according to the syndicalists' timetable. The general strike revealed the divisions and weaknesses of the labor movement, as well as the discontent of the masses, which they channeled into incoherent violence and protest rather than into organizational efforts. Due to its spontaneous and disorganized nature, the strike probably never posed a real threat to the social order. However, many Argentines

preoccupied with the depression and with revolution abroad assumed that it did. Under these conditions the repression of workers was mounted, and the Liga Patriótica Argentina was born.

In the early hours of January 10, 1919, security forces and vigilantes attacked working-class neighborhoods, releasing their accumulated anxieties and desire for revenge by destroying labor and leftist political headquarters, libraries, newspaper offices, and cultural centers and beating, shooting, and arresting thousands — including many innocent bystanders.¹⁴ Meanwhile similar acts were being committed in Jewish neighborhoods, especially in the seventh and ninth police precincts, or Barrio Once, and also in Caballito and Villa Crespo. Jewish victims called the destruction of communal, organizational and private property, and the brutality which resulted in one death and seventy-one injured, a pogrom; the police, soldiers, and vigilantes called it la caza del ruso.¹⁵ The excesses of the "hunt" embarrassed Dellepiane, who attempted to restrain the men under his command. He sent a note to police precinct headquarters, pointing out that most Jews were peaceful, hard-working members of society and were not to be equated with the strikers.

Yet Dellepiane also bore some of the blame for the persecution of workers and Jews. According to one policeman's account, the General ordered the infantry's security squadron to distribute Colt revolvers and bullets to numerous civilian volunteers, presumably with Yrigoyen's authorization. The same policeman stated that officers

passed out arms quickly and carelessly, without asking their new owners for any identification or receipts.¹⁶ Even if this story was false, Dellepiane did little to discourage the formation of civilian militias (which admittedly would have been difficult), and later he himself enrolled in the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

It is hard to distinguish between the vigilante groups and the official forces because their actions were intertwined and because soldiers participated in the former. The vigilantes, civil guards, or militias, as they were alternately called, were coordinated by two bodies: the Comité Nacional de la Juventud, whose offices lay in the center of downtown, and the Centro Naval, located on the fashionable Calle Florida. On the night of the tenth, members of the Comité gathered in the Confitería París, on the edge of wealthy Barrio Norte, to discuss the group's response as a whole to the general strike. Determined to constitute themselves as a special deputized force to maintain order, they drafted a letter to that effect and sent it to the federal police chief, Elpidio González. In the communication the Comité also recognized the workers' right to strike but protested their use of violence, and it laid aside its opposition to the Yrigoyen government in view of the national emergency. González rejected their proposal.

Meanwhile the Centro Naval had entered the action. Ever since the general strike began, it had served as a meeting place for concerned naval officers and for hundreds of youths, many from the Comité, who

wished to defend the city against the strikers. Under Rear Admiral Manuel Domecq García's orders, arms and vehicles were collected and distributed to the youths, while the officers, including naval captains Jorge Yalour and one Malbrán instructed the volunteers on the use of arms. During these training sessions, according to one source, a certain Rear Admiral O'Connor compared Buenos Aires of 1919 with St. Petersburg of 1917 and urged the young men to find and attack the Russians and Catalans (popularly identified with anarchists) in their own neighborhoods, if they did not venture downtown.¹⁷ Domecq García (who became Alvear's naval minister) and Yalour eventually joined the Liga Patriótica Argentina, Domecq García as its first provisional president.

It is interesting to speculate on the naval officers' reasons for entering the fray. The Argentine military had traditionally played a role in quelling threats to the internal order, from revolts against the government to violent strikes. Furthermore, movement from the officer corps into the top ranks of the federal police was common. Many officers viewed leftism as a dangerous ideology which undermined national integrity and national security, a point of view epitomized by Uriburu, and cared little for Yrigoyen's relative restraint against its adherents. Also, presumably the same yearnings for action and experience which characterized young civilians were also found in young officers, particularly when one considers the time elapsed since the military's last foreign engagement. Still, it had been the army

which had shouldered the major burden of internal defense; perhaps the navy was eager to assume its own portion of these duties out of inter-service rivalry.

On January 11 the Comité Nacional de la Juventud, along with many sympathizers, met at the Centro Naval and decided to offer its help to General Dellepiane. (It should be noted that some of these volunteers were Radicals, while other young Radicals separately offered their assistance to the government.) Villar Sáenz Peña transmitted this proposition to Dellepiane, who politely thanked him but turned it down as unnecessary. Nevertheless, the Comité and the Centro Naval continued to make their plans. The next day, Sunday the twelfth, Domecq García organized a group primarily of officers to parade throughout the city, singing the national anthem. Meanwhile he had invited over 500 youths to meet in the morning at the Centro Naval. It was decided to inscribe these youths and all other volunteers in a permanent city-wide civil guard. That night a proposal for setting up this new organization was formulated by the directors of the Centro Naval. The next day Domecq García sent a note to the Círculo Militar, asking the prestigious club of active and retired army officers to send a delegate to a meeting on the fifteenth in the Centro Naval. At this meeting, affairs of "social interest" related to the recent events would be discussed.¹⁸

The inscription of volunteers into the formal civil guard began on Sunday and continued through the next few days; by Monday evening

alone it had attracted 1000 men. With the formation of the guard, Villar Sáenz Peña announced that the Comité's mission was complete. All civilian volunteers from now on were to be at the disposition of the navy. On the thirteenth and the fourteenth Domecq García met with Dellepiane, giving him lists of the civil guard members registered in the Centro Naval. Dellepiane repeated that the government had sufficient forces at its command, but this time the press also reported his statement that it was a good idea for the public to organize in precinct headquarters to help the police. Whether this meant that he genuinely approved of the idea or that he simply wanted to avoid antagonizing the navy was not clear.

These steps by the Centro Naval only ratified at a higher level the informal actions taken below — with its aid and encouragement. Meanwhile, between the tenth and fourteenth, the white terror was taking place. Youths of the Comité participated in this repression, joined by other men, some of whom may have been recruited by local Radical party committees. Carrying weapons from the armory, the Centro Naval, or their own storerooms, they roamed around the city searching for action, or, as they ironically put it, "maintaining order."

Members of the Comité also numbered among those citizens who gathered in police precinct headquarters to form patrols and discuss other ways of protecting their families and property. Some of these militias were composed wholly of Comité youths, as was that of the

first precinct, located just to the north of the Plaza de Mayo, organized by Francisco Uriburu on the night of the tenth. Others had few or none, but did contain military officers and prominent citizens; the militia of the seventeenth precinct, the prestigious Barrio Norte, whose members included a naval captain and a rear admiral, represented this type. Also in this category was the militia of the thirteenth precinct, situated in Caballito, an area with a substantial Jewish population. The future president of the Liga Patriótica Argentina, Manuel Carlés, belonged to this militia (but not any Jews, as far as is known); whether he participated in the pogrom which hit Caballito is not clear.

The Semana Trágica ended, but citizens continued to organize guards in city precincts, including lower middle-class areas such as Villa Urquiza and Villa Devoto. Demonstrations against maximalism took place in Santa Fe and other areas of the interior, while threats against Jewish lives, homes, businesses, and communal organizations persisted. Fear for their personal safety and property drove some Jews themselves into the party of order. Anxious to distinguish themselves from the radical elements, some community leaders spoke with Dellepiane, insisting that most Jews were law-abiding.¹⁹ These same men formed the self-styled Comité Oficial Israelita, which in mid-January published an appeal from "150,000 Israclites to the People of the Republic." In the Comité's words:

[The Jews are] Suspected of propagating a dissolvent doctrine, which has altered the order to extremes both monstrous and repugnant . . . 150,000 Israelites atone for the misdemeanors of a minority whose nationality is not exclusive and whose flaming crime could not have been conceived in the womb of any particular community, but in the negation of God, of the fatherland and of the law.

Jewish leftists bitterly criticized the Comité Oficial for slandering their views. This did not, however, stop the Comité Oficial from meeting with Yrigoyen on January 25. Its members told him that the community it represented suffered by virtue of its religion and national origins, not by its actions, and was in constant danger of attack. The committee hoped for decisive government action and unequivocal denunciation of the "false and dangerous legend" that the Jews were neither loyal nor peaceful.²⁰

By this time the Chamber of Deputies had discussed the recent occurrences and the Jewish appeals, and it demanded an explanation from the government. Beset by mounting criticism, Yrigoyen publically disassociated himself from the anti-Semitic aspects of the repression and promised to ask the Minister of the Interior for an investigation. Anti-Jewish sentiments were incompatible with Argentine tradition, he claimed, and racism was the philosophy of only certain sectors, not of the entire country or of its government. He concluded that in the eyes of the nation, Jewish immigration had been a "beneficial and important element."²¹

Yrigoyen neglected to explain the anti-Semitic statements in the Radical press, and vigilantes' ties to the police and military, and the

part that individual Radicals had played and continued to play in the civil guards. In addition, his words and those of the Comité Oficial failed to assuage the suspicions of those "certain sectors." In the weeks following the Semana Trágica, anti-Semitic posters appeared on the streets of Buenos Aires, some bearing the signature of the Comité pro Argentinidad. One poster of this Comité characterized the appeal for justice from 150,000 Jews as "crocodile tears" over the slaughter. The Jews tried to convince the Argentines that they had nothing to do with the recent events, but perhaps only one out of a thousand was innocent. In reality, the Russian Jews who infested the country were totally responsible for the blood and lives of so many Argentines, as they also were for the "Revolution of 1910" which had tried to ruin the centennial. The Russian Jewish rabble not only had attacked police headquarters, military conscripts, and the "guardians of order," but had corrupted the university students, who, under the influence of these "pimps" (agentes de lenocinios) were losing their patriotism. The manifesto ended by exhorting the government to free the nation of the Jewish contagion.²² The members of the Comité Pro Argentinidad were unknown, but men of these sentiments had perpetrated the white terror and would join the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

Meanwhile, near the end of the Semana Trágica, groups of citizens collected funds for the families of the men who had been killed or wounded by workers in the streets. One was a city-wide committee headed by Domecq García; others were organized by neighborhood. The

most important fund-raising group was called — suggestively — the Comisión Pro-Defensa del Orden. Its 111 members included Radicals and Conservatives, although the latter were better represented than the former. The Comisión divided itself into committees to seek donations from different sectors of the economy and society: banks and financial companies, railroads, universities, meat-packing plants, cereal exporters, shipping companies, landowners, newspaper staffs, and so on. Among its members were some of the most powerful businessmen and estancieros in the country. Many were affiliated with the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo and a few with the Círculos de Obreros and other Catholic organizations. Also found in the Comisión were military officers (including General Luis Dellepiane) and members of the neighborhood civil guards and of the Comité Nacional de la Juventud.²³ The composition of the Comisión Pro-Defensa del Orden demonstrated the continuity of the Argentine right, a continuity that would be preserved when most of the Comisión joined the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

Meanwhile other organizations concerned with the defense of order were mushrooming all over the city and surrounding areas. Some were militias in neighborhoods ranging from seedy Constitución to plush Belgrano. Others were broader in scope, such as the Liga Pro-Patria, under Nicolás A. Calvo, a wealthy landowner. The object of the Liga was to unite Argentines of all classes and fortunes behind the national banner and traditions. The Liga welcomed all foreigners who

supported order and work, but not those who believed in class welfare — a fallacious concept, for the "best-known professionals and greatest fortunes" came from the proletariat. (The Liga, however, provided no examples.) By helping the authorities to maintain order, members would show the evil foreigners that patriotism, virility, and manhood still abounded in Argentina. The Liga would use all means at its disposal to impede the diffusion of theories which subverted the nation.²⁴

These overlapping groups coalesced into the Liga Patriótica Argentina, which was organized by the Centro Naval in the following manner. At the meeting in the Centro Naval on January 15, 1919, to which Domecq García had invited the Círculo Militar, delegates discussed the perpetuation of the city-wide civil guard which at that moment was being formed. A committee headed by Domecq García sent out a circular to prestigious figures and important associations in Buenos Aires, imploring them to come to the defense of order. In this circular the committee referred to the recent traumatic events in the capital, caused by elements who constituted the "slag heap" (escoria) of Europe and who had spread their germs among the weak-spirited. It proposed the creation of a permanent organization of Argentine citizens to guard against similar occurrences in the future. This organization would have as its motto "Fatherland and Order" and would be called the Liga Patriótica Argentina.²⁵

Delegates from the Jockey Club, Círculo de Armas, Centro Naval, Círculo Militar, Club del Progreso, Yacht Club, and Asociación de

Damas Patricias, as well as army and naval officers, prominent clerics (including De Andrea), students, politicians, and professionals were present at the first organizational meeting of the Liga on January 20, 1919. Its provisional president was Domencq García and the secretaries were Rodolfo Medina, university professor and bureaucrat, and naval Lieutenant Pedro Etchepare. The delegates decided that the new group would serve no narrow partisan interest. Instead its goals would be to defend the Argentine nationality and maintain the unity of the populace. The Liga would promote argentinidad in citizens of all religions, political parties, ages, and fortunes and would make them aware of their Argentine heritage and their civil obligations.

Lobbying for the building of schools would be a task of the Liga, for there the children learned to love and honor their country. The celebration of national holidays would be encouraged, while prizes for the best popular works on Argentine history, the virtues of social harmony and class conciliation, and other related topics would be awarded. The organizers of the Liga hoped that these publications would compete with anarchist pamphlets for the attention of workers and would eventually overtake the latter in popularity. The Liga would instill love for the army and navy in the people, showing them that it was an honor to serve in the institutions which protected Argentine homes, order, and liberty. Another task was to explain to foreigners (i.e. revolutionaries) that while Argentina was the most liberal and hospitable country in the world, its inhabitants prized

their national traditions and would defend them by arms if necessary. In addition, the Liga would promote by all possible means the welfare of the poorer classes and would try to elevate their "moral level." It would teach them that all "healthy" ideas and all reasonable political solutions were possible under the Constitution, which did not impede social innovations within the given order. Finally, when anarchism, maximalism, or violent strikes threatened the public order, the Liga would help the authorities prevent property destruction and safeguard homes.²⁶

A number of implicit beliefs lay behind the Liga's objectives. It may be self-evident but nevertheless worth noting that its members believed in the legitimacy of the given order. Change was possible but only within the confines of a socioeconomic system based on private property and private ownership of the means of production; the masses could aspire toward a more equitable distribution of wealth but not communal control over the creation of this wealth, a goal which entailed class conflict. This was the heart of the difference between the Liga and its revolutionary opponents. This also explained how the Liga in theory supported the organization of workers to improve their economic standing and opposed only those labor federations which aimed at altering property relations. Furthermore, while opposing radical change, Liga members proposed social welfare programs with the intention of stealing the thunder of the revolutionary left and coopting the working class.

Liguistas also believed that all radicals were foreigners, or at least that radicalism was a foreign import extraneous to Argentine tradition. (On the one hand they admitted that the lower classes had ample reason to protest their living conditions; on the other hand, they contradicted themselves by saying that outside agitators were responsible for labor unrest.) Being an Argentine inherently excluded the possibility of being an anarchist or maximalist. Since patriotism was moral, anything which militated against national unity — that is, ideologies advocating class conflict — was immoral. Nationalism was thus linked with order and morality.

During the months following the first meeting, the Liga broadened its base to encompass the greater Buenos Aires area and eventually the entire republic. The precinct guards formed during the Semana Trágica became the core of its organization. In the semimilitary spirit which characterized the Liga, the militias became known as "brigades," numbered according to the police precinct; there were forty-five precincts in the capital, and the Liga began with brigades in all but two of them.²⁷ Other brigades were organized by livelihood or professional association. There was even a short-lived brigade of twenty to thirty Jews, most of whom were wealthy businessmen with close ties to the Argentine upper class and few, if any, to the Jewish community.²⁸

During and after the Semana Trágica, similar guards had been organized in other parts of the nation, particularly where labor was

active. They too joined the Liga as the brigades of their locality. Brigades outside the capital were also established in other ways. Members of the temporary executive communicated with acquaintances in the interior and entrusted them with the task of raising brigades, or sometimes prominent individuals contacted the executive and volunteered their services. Fearful of strikes by landless peons, farmers asked the Liga to help them organize brigades, and often the Liga sent recruiters to rural areas of labor strife, ranging from Jujuy to Bahía Blanca.²⁹ Eventually brigades were set up in each province and national territory.

Meanwhile the Liga perfected its organization in the federal capital. At the end of January 1919 Domecq García asked twenty-two men to form its provisional Junta Central Directiva, among them Miguel De Andrea, Carlos Aubone, Nicolás Calvo, Manuel Carlés, Estanislao Zeballos, three other politicians, three military officers, and several journalists. The Junta held its first meeting on February 3, when it set up committees to publicize the Liga's goals and activities, raise funds, and formulate its statutes.³⁰

During February the Junta discussed organizational matters and possible social welfare projects, while Domecq García announced his decision to relinquish the presidency to a civilian. On March 31 the Junta approved the statutes drawn up by the committee and set the first election of permanent officials for April 5. The program of action put forth in the statutes was basically a restatement of the

goals mentioned on January 19. The statutes also described the structure of the new organization.³¹ The Liga was composed of the Junta Central in the capital, its supreme authority, and local associations in the same city and throughout the republic. Delegates elected by the associations made up the Junta Central, and in turn these delegates elected the Liga's eight officers who, together with seven others chosen by the Junta, formed the Consejo Ejecutivo. The Consejo formulated policy, recognized new brigades and coordinated their activities, held national publicity campaigns, supervised the funds, and reported annually to the Junta Central on the "state of the Liga." The sole prerequisite for forming a brigade was agreement with the Liga's aims. Brigades were free to organize themselves as their members wished and then petition the central authority for recognition and funds, if necessary. Similarly, there were few requirements for membership in the brigades. All adult citizens by birth or naturalization, female or male, were eligible, regardless of whether they could pay the recommended annual dues of three pesos.³²

The brigades enjoyed a wide degree of autonomy but were ultimately responsible to the Junta and Consejo, with whom they corresponded on local activities and with whom their presidents met periodically in Buenos Aires. The Junta Central often sent representatives on investigative or coordinating missions to the provinces. In addition, delegates from the brigades gathered at annual congresses to make policy, present papers outlining solutions to national problems, and

hear reports from members of the Junta and Liga commissions on finance, social welfare, military affairs, legislation, and other matters. Similar to the national level of this organization, each brigade had its own elected officers, commissions, and treasury. Each brigade also constituted its own paramilitary force, which in cities were called "neighborhood defense commissions" and in the countryside, somewhat ironically, "commissions in defense of rural labor." The neighborhood defense commissions were organized hierarchically, with the jefe de sector in charge of the jefes de barrio, who in turn dominated the jefes de calle. The rural commissions were also organized hierarchically, with estancieros and their staffs leading the peons. Sometimes the Junta Central would augment the paramilitary forces by sending them reinforcements. By 1922 the Liga claimed to have 1527 brigades, undoubtedly an inflated figure.³³ Still, in its sphere of influence and in its centralized national organization, it was comparable only to the political party in power, the U.C.R. — and it was much more tightly knit than the latter.

The organizational genius behind this impressive structure was Manuel Carlés, who was elected president on April 5, 1919 and remained in office until his death in 1946. At first glance he was not the kind of person whom one would expect to lead a repressive organization. On the occasion of his death, an admiring writer for La Prensa called him "one of the most representative personalities of the Argentine patriciate" and "love of country personified."³⁴ Carlés was born in

Rosario in 1872 — characteristically, near the Plaza de Mayo — of socially prominent parents; his father was widely known as a learned gentleman and as the first rosarino to export grain to Europe. From an early age on he attended his father's intellectual tertulias, which awakened in him a deep interest in Argentine studies, an enthusiasm which grew with the years.

The young Carlés journeyed to Buenos Aires to seek his fortune, armed with three letters of introduction from his father: to Mitre, Sarmiento, and José C. Paz, founder of La Prensa. He began to collaborate in Sarmiento's newspaper, El Censor, and to discuss issues with the former president, with whom he shared a reverence for education. Meanwhile he initiated his political career, participating in the revolution of 1893, becoming a friend of such figures as Carlos Pellegrini, José Figueroa Alcorta, and Roque Sáenz Peña, and serving as national deputy from 1898 to 1912. He also headed the postal service under José E. Uriburu and was active in Roque Sáenz Peña's election, although the passage of the Sáenz Peña law precipitated his exit from the Chamber and from electoral politics. In the 'teens he devoted his efforts to his law career and teaching; for many years he taught Argentine history, geography, constitutional law, and "civic morality" at the Escuela Nacional de Guerra, Colegio Militar, Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, and the Universidad de Buenos Aires. Through teaching he made many contacts with military officers, instilled his passion for Argentina into students, and received recognition for

his intellectual gifts. His oratorical ability had already brought him fame during his days in the Chamber.

Carlés did not oppose Yrigoyen, at least not during the latter's first presidency. He supported his policies and headed his intervention in Salta in 1918. Initially Yrigoyen did not perceive him or his ideas as threatening; during February 1919, while Carlés and others were publically organizing the Liga, the President was considering Carlés as a possible minister of the navy.³⁵ Carlés' good personal relations with the Radicals continued under Alvear, an old friend, who appointed him as interventor in San Juan in 1922.

The Liga president viewed his activities as entirely commensurate with those of any patriotic, law-abiding citizen; he considered himself an unpaid public servant. His formal, somber dress, his dignified manner, and his flowery, impassioned oratory made him the picture of old republican virtue and hidalguía. In many ways he — and the Liga — embodied the contradictions of the old liberal-conservative political class. Its members revered honor and patriotism and theoretically believed in equality (at least, before the law), freedom, and economic mobility. Nevertheless, in protecting their own standing, Liga members would deny others these rights and thus dishonor the very principles they claimed to uphold. The Liga symbolized the exhaustion of the classical liberalism of the political class. With the march of time it had become outmoded, and the spector of revolution pushed some members of the political class even further to the right.

In the normal course of events most of them were merely conservative; under pressure the liguistas became counterrevolutionaries.

Before describing their counterrevolutionary activities, it would be useful to explore the relationship between the Liga and the government. The Liga originated because many citizens believed that government forces were insufficient to stem the revolutionary tide. The attitude of the Yrigoyen regime toward the civil guards of the Semana Trágica ranged from polite dissuasion to active encouragement. Indeed, one Liga source later claimed that the government itself encharged Captain Yalour with the task of forming neighborhood militias to help the police, and that the Liga was born when Yalour discussed his task with other naval officers in the Centro Naval.³⁶ Moreover, referring to the combined efforts of the army, the police, and the citizen militias, the Radical party organ La Época on January 11, 1919 stated approvingly that "the firm attitude of the conservative forces of order kept the antisocial elements from going too far astray." La Protesta and La Vanguardia noted repeatedly that the government had intermittently fomented the Liga in a more or less open manner. In March the Minister of the Interior, Ramón Gómez, agreed to allow the Liga to display its signs in the post offices. According to a policeman's account, the Liga's aim of combatting leftism coincided with that of the Radical regime, which not only permitted the brigades to meet in police precinct headquarters but authorized policemen to become members.³⁷

As the Liga grew in size and influence, however, government benevolence began to fade. Four months after the birth of the Liga, a sympathetic reporter from Caras y Caretas commented on its status. He noted a continual stream of people flowing in and out of the Liga office at the Centro Naval. Liga officials decided to move the central office from these palatial surroundings to an even larger space in a building on Florida and Lavalle, whose multimillionaire owner, Saturnino Unzué, a Liga member, would charge the organization only half the usual rent. According to Liga sources, by November its emblem appeared in 833 localities.³⁸

One of the main events which demonstrated Liga strength to the public and to the government was its part in the independence celebration. The Liga organized a parade for the festivities of May 24, 1919 which included its brigades of the federal capital. About 120,000 people marched in the procession, although the Liga admitted that only one-sixth of the participants belonged to the organization. Even this figure may have been an exaggerated one. Nevertheless, the fact that it could mobilize that many people must have disturbed the government, particularly since the latter's parade, by some accounts, lacked the luster and enthusiasm of the Liga's.³⁹

As long as the Liga confined itself to helping official forces against workers, the government on the whole viewed it favorably; once it seemed to be setting itself up as a political rival to Radicalism, it received more hostile treatment. To many observers, the Liga, with

its talk of protecting Argentine borders, building schools, working for the social wellbeing of Argentines, and the like seemed to be usurping the government's rightful functions. As the Socialist deputy Nicolás Repetto stated in the Chamber, the liguistas claimed to be liberating workers from "anarchist tyranny." Even if this tyranny could be proven to exist, the task of liberation would belong to the government or to the workers themselves, not the Liga.⁴⁰

Despite its emphasis on the Constitution, the Liga also seemed to threaten civil government in another respect. The characteristic of the Liga which perhaps most alarmed the Radical regime was the extent of military involvement in it. By the end of July 1919 the Liga claimed six generals, eighteen colonels, thirty-two lieutenant colonels, fifty majors, 212 captains, 300 lieutenants, and over 400 sublieutenants as members.⁴¹ At its head were retired and active military officers. Members of the armed forces made public displays of allegiance to the Liga, military aviators spread Liga propaganda, and the Liga held conferences to instruct officers on national problems. Furthermore, the Liga tried to disseminate its ideas within the ranks of the armed forces, although not always successfully. La Vanguardia reported that at the end of February a sergeant read a Liga manifesto to his company and asked the soldiers to sign it. Only one corporal responded to his plea, which angered the sergeant, who called the soldiers socialists and maximalists. One soldier stepped forward and insisted that he was a patriot but not a papist, and that he did not

want his name to appear next to that of De Andrea. (Naturally the anticlerical Socialist paper approved of these sentiments.) The sergeant sent him to the stockade for his impertinence and punished the company by confining it to quarters.⁴²

Support for the Liga was widespread among officers, if not among the common soldiers and sailors. Antimilitarist Socialists as well as Radicals recognized the danger that such military involvement in politics posed to constitutional rule. In addition, Repetto pointed out in the Chamber the threat represented simply by the Liga's paramilitary organization: its defense commissions, its attempts to substitute itself for the police, its hierarchical structure. In his opinion, the government should not permit such an entity to exist.⁴³ Yrigoyen never banned the Liga, however. He did try to divorce it from the government. As a first step, Radical newspapers began to comment on the presence of "moneyed interests" associated with the deposed régimen in the Liga, describing the latter as a device for has-been politicians to revive their careers. (While this presence was genuine, it did not completely overshadow that of some Radicals in the Liga, especially Radicals who later split off into the Antipersonalist wing.)

In August the Liga was forbidden to hold meetings in police stations or to recruit policemen as members. From this time on, whether by government request or unspoken understanding, when Liga officials were appointed to public positions they were expected to

resign their Liga posts. The government also tried, with less success, to sever the ties between the Liga and the military. In July the Minister of War prohibited military personnel on active duty from joining the Liga, but when army officers protested, the government relented.⁴⁴ Military officers remained prominent in Liga affairs throughout the 1920's; over 100 served as members of the Junta and Consejo and as delegates from the brigades to the national congresses (which usually meant that they were brigade officials). How military participation in the Liga affected its later propensity for political intervention is an intriguing question, but one which lack of data prevents answering.

Another interesting question is that of the Liga's perception of its own role in politics. In a myriad of pamphlets, press releases, and speeches, Liga publicists insisted that their organization represented no partisan political interest and that it was, indeed, above all parties. Probably their claims were sincere, for until the late 1920's Carlés and other leaders never discussed participating in electoral politics, perhaps because they realized that the Radicals were nearly invincible. During Yrigoyen's second presidency, however, Radical weaknesses became apparent, and the Liga's attitude changed, as will be discussed later.

Although the Liga continued to function in the strike-prone federal capital, from 1920 to 1921 its principal arena was the countryside. In order to understand the shift in geographical focus, one must

look again at rural economic conditions and the evolution of the labor movement.⁴⁵ In 1919 world grain prices were low, heavy rains had damaged the 1918-1919 crop, and a port strike impeded the transport of goods to the market. The F.A.A. begged Yrigoyen for a rent moratorium and government loans but received no response. Out of desperation the F.A.A. called a rent strike, which 70,000 tenant farmers joined by March 1919. Government indifference and a steady worsening of conditions had radicalized the farmers. For the first time in its history, the F.A.A. demanded the redistribution of land and destroyed machinery and crops to demonstrate its fervor. Viewing the strike as a revolutionary threat, and perhaps with reason, the government ordered the police to arrest and deport its leaders, thus breaking it by mid-June. In hopes of preventing further discord by dividing large estates into smaller holdings, Socialists, Progressive Democrats, and dissident Radicals proposed a heavy land tax in Congress. Yrigoyen, however, favored authorizing the National Mortgage Bank to make more funds available to those who wished to buy small holdings. This measure passed, but without much effect, and Yrigoyen did not institute any further reforms.

Meanwhile, in order to secure a twelve-hour day and a minimum wage, the landless farm workers began to organize in the late 'teens, and many affiliated their unions with F.O.R.A. IX. In December 1919 farm labor unions carried out huge strikes in the cereal zone lasting for several weeks. Fearing further disruption of production on their

farms, F.A.A. members applauded the police repression of these strikes. A large strike of harvest laborers occurred in early 1920, and this time newly organized Liga Brigades joined the police to suppress the workers.

Conflicts between tenants and landowners, and particularly between these groups on the one hand and laborers on the other, characterized the years 1919 to 1921. This was a busy time for the Liga at the local and national levels. Brigades arose in the interior, tried to group landless workers into what they called "associations of free labor," and set up defense commissions to patrol villages and fields. Delegations from the Junta Central investigated strife-torn areas, and Carlés and other liguistas offered their organization's peace-keeping services to governors and local officials. The three most significant cases of the Liga's defense of rural order occurred in Villaguay and Gualeguaychú, Entre Ríos, and in Patagonia, all in 1921.

The Villaguay incident began around January 1921, during the harvest, when a farm workers union in nearby Villa Domínguez presented a list of demands to farmers and owners of threshing machines.⁴⁶ The laborers asked for better working conditions and salaries and recognition of their union, which represented several different types of workers from all over the region, almost all of whom were criollos. The demands were rejected and the union, supported by the local Socialist center, called a strike. For some time, farmers and

businessmen in the department of Villaguay had proclaimed that they would not tolerate union activity. In defense of their position they had formed a "social defense brigade" and had affiliated with the Liga in early 1920. The machine owners hired "scab" laborers, but as the strike persisted some small farmers decided to make concessions to strikers in order to end the costly work stoppage. A local association of machine owners, however, stood firm and demanded nothing less than total victory over the union.

The union secretary, one Axentzoff, and two other members were arrested for having "incited the workers" and sent to the prison in Villaguay. The Socialist center in Villaguay and the union decided to hold a peaceful mass protest against their imprisonment. Fearful of vigilante action, the union first asked the provincial minister of government to guarantee the demonstrators' safety. The minister replied that no such guarantees were necessary, since demonstrations were permitted by law, and the union scheduled the protest for February 11. Rumors of a Jewish and criollo horde advancing toward Villaguay for the rally alarmed local citizens, and the Liga brigade prepared to greet them.

On February 11 a line of protesters about one-and-a-half blocks long headed for the main plaza of town. Women and children, comprising about one-third of the group, led the march. After they reached the plaza they were surrounded by townspeople and the police. A speaker began to address the crowd, asking that the prisoners be freed.

Suddenly shots rang out; who fired them was unclear. According to one account, demonstrators began to fire on police when the latter attempted to disband their meeting, because allegedly they had not applied for permission to hold it. Another source claimed that the protesters merely fired their guns up in the air. The Villaguay police chief admitted that the firing only "seemed" to come from the demonstrators. The Socialists, of course, insisted that the shooting came from the throng surrounding the workers.

General pandemonium broke loose as firing resumed, mounted police and liguistas charged through the crowd, and women and children attempted to flee. Approximately thirty were wounded, mostly workers, and as many as five were killed, including one of the citizens on horseback, the son of Alberto Montiel, provincial senator and caudillo of the local conservative party. Julio Serebrinsky, editor of a Socialist party newspaper in Concordia, Entre Ríos, was slashed with a machete and thrown into prison, along with seventy-four workers. The prisoners received no medical attention, little food, and generally brutal treatment. Police and Liga forces guarded the railroad station, ready to arrest any suspicious-looking passengers getting off the train. No matter who started the shooting, the Villaguay bourgeoisie had been armed and clearly better prepared for action than the workers. Ironically, four days later on February 15, a judge arrived from Gualeguay and freed Axentzoff. When Axentzoff set out for Villa Domínguez, however, members of the Liga assaulted him and warned that similar acts of "justice" might follow.

Provincial newspaper editors, police, vigilantes, and politicians, including a U.C.R. national deputy from Entre Ríos, Eduardo Mouesca, blamed the violence on Jewish extremists such as Axentzoff and Serebrinsky. Many Russian Jews lived in the vicinity of Villaguay, but ironically most of them were colonists. As farmers and machine owners, they opposed the workers; whether they belonged to the Liga is doubtful, although they may have contributed to its treasury.⁴⁷ In a heated exchange in the Chamber, Socialist deputy Fernando De Andréis estimated that, at most, only thirteen of the seventy-five prisoners were Jews. To this Mouesca replied that he was mistaken and all the prisoners were Jews. Even if they were, said De Andréis, what difference would it make, since they all lived and worked in Argentina? The Radical deputy responded, "It matters to me since this represents a custom of those people." Labeling his words "reprehensible," the Socialist deputy Repetto denounced Mouesca for expressing racist sentiments in a country where they "did not exist." On the contrary, the Villaguay incident proved not only that liguistas often were anti-Semitic, but that many other persons, including Radicals, shared these sentiments. Indeed, many Liga members in the interior were Radical, and neither the national or provincial Radical administrations (such as the Entre Ríos government) stopped the Liga from using coercive methods. Successive events in Villaguay demonstrated the friendly relations between enterriano officials and the Liga.

The Socialist party sent De Andréis to Villaguay to assume the imprisoned workers' defense. Fearful of Liga reprisals, local Socialists refrained from greeting De Andréis at the railroad station. The deputy found that the Liga had pressured hotel owners into not giving him a room, so he was forced to stay in a friend's home. A Liga delegation visited the house the first night of his stay, requesting that the Socialist leave that same evening. Only personal deference to his host, a respected local citizen, restrained them from using violence. The next day found De Andréis still in Villaguay, interviewing a few of the prisoners; the police kept most of them incommunicado, despite a judge's ruling to the contrary. The jailed workers' accounts, popular fear that the deputy's presence would anger the Liga, and his contact with the brigade impressed De Andréis with the danger of his position. He sent a telegram asking the Chamber to guarantee his safety. Meanwhile the Liga held a public assembly in a Villaguay theater and prepared for a large rally with cohorts from Villa Domínguez, Clara, Gualeguaychú, Concepción del Uruguay, and Concordia. In the latter city the local brigade destroyed the Socialist center and the printing press of Serebrinsky's newspaper.

The Chamber forwarded De Andréis's telegram to the Radical governor of Entre Ríos, Celestine Marcó, with some of the deputies expressing their shock over the Liga's audacity. By this time the governor had also received a direct communication from De Andréis, asking him to intervene and protect the prisoners, since the police had

not adequately guarded those in jail or those freed (Axentzoff). Marcó replied that police protection was sufficient, and added that these repressions were inevitable, for society had to carry them out "more in order to save its honor than to assure its stability." As if to remind the police of their duties of honor, Marcó sent them a copy of his telegram to the Socialist deputy. When De Andréis finally left town, an official police statement celebrated his departure:

Happily Deputy De Andréis leaves today; if his stay had been longer . . . the guarantees that he demands without cause would not have served to protect him . . .

It will surprise no one that the junta of the Villaguay brigade included relatives of the local police chief and that liguistas often congregated in police headquarters, a fact of which Marcó must have been aware. De Andréis summed up the Villaguay affair by noting that the main causal agent was the police -- "at the exclusive service of . . . the brigade of the Liga Patriótica."

By the beginning of April the prisoners were finally freed. One month later the Liga again reared its head in Entre Ríos, this time in Gualeguaychú. It should be evident that the littoral during this period experienced continual labor turmoil. Because of its proximity and commercial ties to Buenos Aires, port strikes in the capital as well as the peons' attempts to organize and other problems of local origin affected the region. Work stoppages and clashes between the

Federación Obrera Marítima (F.O.M.), affiliated to the syndicalist F.O.R.A. IX, and coastal shipping companies, between the F.O.M. and an anarchist union, and between syndicalists, anarchists, and strike-breakers hired by the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo marked the year 1920 and the first half of 1921.⁴⁸

These events had strong repercussions in Entre Ríos, and especially in the port town of Gualeguaychú.⁴⁹ The provincial economy depended heavily on exporting foodstuffs to Buenos Aires and importing other necessity items from there through cheap river transport or a more expensive combination of railroad and ferryboat. The longshoremen's union of Gualeguaychú, affiliated with F.O.R.A. IX, frequently went on strike during this period in order to achieve recognition and improved working conditions. F.O.M. port workers in Buenos Aires refused to handle cargos consigned to Gualeguaychú merchants, so the latter tried to use the railroad-ferry system. However, F.O.M.-affiliated ferrymen at Zárate, Buenos Aires, refused to carry merchandise destined for Gualeguaychú across the branches of the Paraná to Entre Ríos. As a result, businessmen were forced to resort to roundabout and costly means of shipping, buying, and selling goods.

These problems did not affect all town businesses uniformly; the small merchants suffered the most because large cereal export-import firms in the federal capital had already capitulated to labor demands, and their branches in the interior employed union men. The crisis of the small businessmen caused retail prices to rise, which in turn

caused all consumers to suffer. Through their propaganda efforts, small businessmen and the Liga brigade whipped up nationalist sentiments against "foreign radicals" and even against foreign capital. The murder of Pedro Illesca in November 1920, allegedly committed by F.O.R.A. members, further exasperated the tensions between unionists and the rest of society. An elderly criollo stevedore, Illesca had probably been a strikebreaker. The Liga seized upon his death as an instance of foreign tyrants refusing to allow native-born "free laborers" to work as they saw fit.

Led by landowners and independent merchants, the Gualeguaychú brigade had been formed during 1920. According to its statutes,⁵⁰ the brigade's subtitle was the Organization for the Defense of Production and Industry. Its stated object was to harmonize the actions of individual business enterprises in all matters related to labor with the principles of free labor and the independence of capital. Free labor signified the following: (1) All workers could freely choose and exercise their professions and associate with whomever they pleased. (2) Only income earned from productive labor, not from outside union duties, was justifiable compensation. (3) Workers associations should be democratic organizations whose leaders were elected and tactics decided upon by secret vote. (4) Worker-employer disputes were to be solved by arbitration committees composed of representatives from both sides and led by a delegate from the national or provincial department of labor. (5) The Liga would help

free laborers, especially by stimulating legislation designed to

emphasize social evolution over revolution, order over violence, greater production over work slowdowns, lowering living costs over raising them, the force of the law and justice of the collective entity over arbitrary force or collective or personal vengeance.⁵¹

In practice, to the Gualeguaychú brigade, free labor only meant suppressing labor unions which perpetrated strikes of boycotts. All laborers who worked in the estancias, cereal houses, warehouses, and other establishments owned by Liga members were to enter their names in a registry. If any registered workers denigrated the Liga, the Fatherland, or the principle of free labor, proposed a strike, or tried to impose disorder in their workplaces, their names would be erased from the registry, and the Liga would consider them enemies of the "liberal humanitarian principles" it sustained. As such they would be dismissed from their jobs and denied any other employment. Liguistas would stimulate the formation of mutual aid societies among registered workers, instead of unions, to be financed by the workers themselves and by employers. The statutes also provided for mutual aid and protection among Liga members in defense of their interests against strikers.⁵²

On February 3, 1921 the Gualeguaychú brigade celebrated the anniversary of the battle of Caseros of 1852, in which the entrerriano general, Justo José de Urquiza, defeated the governor of Buenos Aires

and the strongest man in the country, Juan Manuel de Rosas.⁵³ The festivities had purposes other than purely commemorative ones. To the Liga the date symbolized the downfall of rosista tyranny — and heralded the downfall of the tyranny of organized labor as well. In accordance with its program of order, liberty, and work, the brigade invited the public to a celebration designed to prove that Argentines intended to defend their flag against the new despots. It announced that foreigners were welcome, providing that they were intelligent and hard-working. Workers were also invited to come and listen to "the dictates of reason and patriotism" and to rid themselves of the evil propaganda of "degenerates from the sewers (cloacas) of the universe."

Manuel Carlés, Sixto Vela, the president of the brigade, a Miss Veglia Arigliani of the Sociedad Pro-Patria de Señoritas, and other local notables spoke at the ceremony. So did a young bricklayer names Lescano, who saluted "the sons of free labor." For his part, Carlés decried the fact that the hard-working citizens of Gualeguaychú were wedged between federated laborers — who never labored — and usurious capital, referring to the large cereal firms. The event was climaxed by a Parade of Free Labor, which, significantly, consisted of 1400 peons on horseback and hundreds of others in horse-pulled wagons. If thus far the free labor banner had only managed to "attract" peons, then it was not doing well at all. Even in times of rural strife, the peons were the workers most easily manipulated by their patrón.

In the months following the anniversary of Caseros, Sixto Vela and his brigade worked to establish free labor throughout the department of Gualeguaychú, breaking up strikes and organizing their peons.

Near the end of April, with social peace seemingly within its grasp, the brigade announced its plans for a May Day celebration.⁵⁴ Not only was May 1 the day that Urquiza had declared his revolt against Rosas in 1851, but it was the day traditionally commemorated by labor around the world. The Liga hoped to appropriate this symbol of the international workers struggle and transform it into a purely national holiday of free labor, in a manner typical of the Liga's inclination to divest ideas of any universal significance. The Day of the Argentine Worker in Gualeguaychú was destined to conflict with the internationalist May Day, particularly since the local unions affiliated with F.O.R.A. IX scheduled a public celebration of their holiday. When the provincial government gave both sides permission to hold their ceremonies, the stage was set for a showdown.

On the morning of May 1, 1921, the brigades of Gualeguaychú and twelve other towns as far away as Villaguay, about 150 kilometers northwest, paraded into town. The armed peons who formed part of the brigades provided the only amusing moments of the day. Apparently the estancieros had failed to tell them the reason for their journey to Gualeguaychú, and many peons asked when the elections were going to start.⁵⁵ Flown in for the occasion by a military aviator, Carlés was the guest of honor. Local government authorities had hoped to reduce

the possibilities for conflict by assigning the hippodrome to the Liga in the morning and the far-removed plaza to the workers in the afternoon. Their strategem, however, proved unsuccessful.

As the Liga rally dispersed, some of its participants milled toward the plaza on foot and on horseback, and there were not enough policemen to stop them from surrounding the mass of congregated workers. Liguistas demanded that the workers take down their red flag, which the authorities had given them permission to display. When they refused to do so, Sixto Velo advanced toward the center of the plaza and asked them to lower it in order to avoid provocation. The general uproar drowned out his request, and he asked the police chief to intervene. In response to the latter's plea, the workers agreed and carried the flag to police headquarters. After a moment of relief, a liguista unrolled an Argentine flag and penetrated the throng of workers, accompanied by comrades on horseback. To the crowd this appeared as a first advance of an attack. Rapid gunfire followed and prompted the flight of many workers from the plaza and the retreat of others to the police station. At least eighteen people were wounded and two were killed. The fact that most of the casualties were workers and that when the firing stopped, only the liguistas and the fallen were left in the plaza (as well as an eyewitness testimony), strongly indicate that the Liga had initiated the shooting. In addition, no laborers or union members were arrested, but four liguistas were: among them, Juan Francisco Morrogh Bernard, the head of the Gilbert brigade and a local conservative caudillo and landowner.⁵⁶

The provincial government this time did not treat the Liga as favorably as before, perhaps owing to the public outcry over the Villaguay episode or to national political pressure. Another possibility is that the Radical authorities wished to embarrass brigades that may have been largely composed of the opposition. At any rate, the government permitted both sides to hold their meetings, and the police tried to protest the workers and even imprisoned Liga members. In a telegram to Vela, Governor Marcó blamed the Liga for the incident, stating that it had no right to present itself at the Plaza or to attack the red flag. Most of the public seemed to share the governor's views; the conflict became known as the Gualeguaychú massacre. In spite of this fact, or because of it, Carlés called the events in Gualeguaychú a victory for his organization. The bloody triumph, however, may have lost more Liga supporters than it gained.

Thanks to the works of José María Borrero and Osvaldo Bayer, the most publicized case of the Liga's defense of order is its role in the Patagonian repression, yet even in these books its exact involvement is not clear.⁵⁷ On the economic problems and the armed conflicts which characterized the "tragic Patagonia" much is known. The postwar slump had affected sheep-raising Patagonia even more severely than the rest of the country. These conditions created alarm among estancieros and high unemployment and extreme penury among rural laborers. Yrigoyen's actions only served to deepen the gloom. In 1919 he ordered new surveys of the southern national territories (which

landowners feared because they extended their ranches over government lands), and in 1918 he reinstated customs duties in the former free ports of the area. At the same time, the peons began to organize into unions and went out on strike in late 1920, when employers turned down their demands for adequate living and working conditions. In defense of their interests against Radicals and workers, estancieros and merchants formed pressure groups whose actions would be closely tied to those of the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo, autonomous civilian militias, and over 200 brigades of the Liga.

Both sides consisted largely of foreigners; the largest landowners were European immigrants or representatives of foreign landholding companies, while many of the workers were Chilean. Their origins enabled the adversaries to hurl the label "foreigner" against each other. If to the laborers the estancieros were foreign capitalists, to the latter the workers were dangerous foreign elements. Despite their nationalism, Carlés and the Liga did not find it illogical to support European landowners, as they believed that these were "beneficial" foreigners who had contributed to national development. In their opinion the rural proletariat did not share these qualities. The fact that much of the latter came from Chile convinced Carlés that the suppression of Patagonian workers not only signified a battle against a foreign ideology but against a neighboring enemy. In other words, it confirmed his belief that national defense was the same as defense against leftism.

It is difficult to measure the extent of Liga collaboration in the killing of over 1500 strikers in 1921.⁵⁸ Certainly the army bore the major share of responsibility. Yrigoyen sent Lieutenant Colonel Hector B. Varela and the Tenth Cavalry Regiment to end the strike and thus satisfy Patagonian business interests, demonstrate government firmness against labor to the military, and divert the latter from national politics by involving it in a remote conflict. In the Patagonian interior, Liga brigades and other white guards composed of estancieros, managers, foremen, and "free laborers" (some sent in from Buenos Aires by the Liga and the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo) patrolled the countryside with the troops. One Liga official later claimed that Carlés and Domingo Schiaffino, a Junta member, led volunteers from the capital to fight in the southern campaign, but perhaps he was only referring to the free laborers.⁵⁹ The Liga in the coastal ports engaged in other activities. For example, the brigade of Río Gallegos, a committee of merchants and landowners headed by the Spaniard Ibon Noya, contributed fuel, vehicles, housing, and provisions to the army.

The result of Liga activity in Patagonia, however, was clear. During and after the military repression the brigades smashed the labor unions and instituted the principle of free labor in their place, sometimes with the help of the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo. In Río Gallegos in September 1922, the Liga held what it called a "Congress of Good Feeling," dedicated to peacefully strengthening the

cause of free labor and the ties between Patagonia and the rest of the nation.⁶⁰ Although Liga brigades around the country remained vigilant, the Congress symbolized the end of a period of armed strife between labor and capital, and conflict from which the latter, with the Liga's aid, had emerged victorious. From its inception the Liga had also been interested in nonviolent means of class conciliation, and to these it now turned its attention.

Notes

1

Sources for the economic history of this period include Guido Di Tella and Manuel Zymelman, Los ciclos económicos argentinos (Buenos Aires, 1973), pp. 129-186 (for the years 1914-1922) and Joseph S. Tulchin, "The Argentine Economy during the First World War," Review of the River Plate, June 19 and 30, July 10, 1970. Also see Darío Canton, José L. Moreno, and Alberto Ciria, Argentina, la democracia constitucional y su crisis (Buenos Aires, 1972), pp. 21-50.

2

Vicente Vásquez-Presedo, Estadísticas históricas argentinas (comparadas), II: Segunda parte 1914-1939 (Buenos Aires, 1976), p. 46.

3

Rock, Politics in Argentina, p. 170.

4

Vásquez-Presedo, Estadísticas, II, p. 47.

5

Rock, Politics in Argentina, pp. 190-191.

6

On labor and the U.C.R. see *ibid*, pp. 128-129 and 154, and Richard J. Walter, The Socialist Party of Argentina, 1890-1930 (Austin, 1977), p. 168. José Ingenieros provided an interesting account of the President's social views. He related that close associates of Yrigoyen approached him in 1919, asking him to speak with the President on solutions to the social crisis, at the latter's request. Although the interview never took place, Ingenieros sent Yrigoyen a list of recommendations, including the right to work, a minimum wage, price controls, social security, and the gradual expropriation of latifundia, with compensation for owners. The President responded through intermediaries that while he lauded the sentiments behind them, the reforms themselves were inopportune at the moment. Ingenieros concluded that he had no reason to doubt the sincerity of Yrigoyen's intentions, but that sincerity was not enough to accomplish governmental changes. See his "Memorial sobre las orientaciones sociales del Presidente Yrigoyen (1919/1920)," Archivo Farini, Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires, Argentina (henceforth cited as A.G.N.).

7

Solberg, "Rural Unrest," pp. 30-36.

8

On the Comité Nacional de la Juventud see El Diario, Oct. 31, Nov. 1-2 and 14-15, 1918; Caras y Caretas, Nov. 23 and 30, 1918; Juan E. Carulla, Al filo del medio siglo (Paraná, 1951), p. 150. Not all future right-wingers supported the Allies; José F. Uriburu (and other military men) and Juan B. Ramos were Germanophiles. See Ronald Newton, German Buenos Aires, 1900-1933. Social Change and Cultural Crisis (Austin, 1977), p. 36.

9

On this new orientation see Ibarguren, La historia, p. 165; and Carulla, Al filo, pp. 72-73. H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society: The Reconstruction of European Social Thought, 1890-1930 (New York, 1958); and Gerhard Masur, Prophets of Yesterday: Studies in European Culture, 1890-1914 (2nd ed.; New York, 1966) are two excellent works on the intellectual thought of this period.

10

Carulla, Al filo, pp. 145-149. On Maurras see Chapter V.

11

La Vanguardia, Jan. 5, 1919; Caras y Caretas, Jan. 11, 1919; La Prensa, Jan. 3, 1919. According to La Prensa, Jan 2, Gerchunoff, Laferrère, and others resigned from the Comité out of opposition to this new orientation. When Palacios resigned is not clear.

12

La Fronda, Oct. 2, 1919 and Feb. 21, 1920.

13

I have chosen to rely on the following secondary sources on the Semana Trágica: David Rock, "Jucha civil en la Argentina. La Semana Trágica de enero de 1919," Desarrollo Económica, XI (Mar. 1972), pp. 165-215; Hugo del Campo, "La Semana Trágica," Polémica, 53 (1971), pp. 63-84; Nicolás Babini, "La Semana Trágica. Pesadilla de una siesta de verano," Todo Es Historia, I (Sept. 1967), pp. 8-20; Julio Godio, La Semana Trágica de enero de 1919 (Buenos Aires, 1972); and "La Semana Trágica," La Nación, Jan. 9-19, 1969.

14

The following reconstruction of the repression is based on the following (in addition to the sources named in note 13): La Prensa, Jan. 12-15, 1919; La Nación, Jan. 11-15, 1919; La Época, Jan. 10-12, 1919; Caras y Caretas, Jan. 18, 1919; Carulla, Al filo, pp. 159-160; Romariz, La semana trágica. Rock in "Lucha civil," p. 180, estimated that the week resulted in 200 deaths. On the location of police

precincts see República Argentina, Policía de la Capital, Orden del dia, XXXIV (1920), pp. 832-834.

15

Boleslao Lewin, La colectividad judía en la Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1974), p. 128.

16

Romariz, La semana trágica, p. 170.

17

Babini, "Pesadilla," p. 20.

18

Revista Militar, XIX (Jan. 1919), p. 198.

19

La Nación, Jan. 14, 1919.

20

La Prensa, Jan. 25-26, 1919; Lewin, La colectividad, pp. 141-142. Also see Leonardo Senkman, "De 'La Bolsa' a la Semana Trágica," Nueva Presencia, July 16, 1977.

21

La Prensa, Jan. 26, 1919.

22

La Vanguardia, Jan. 23, 1919.

23

La Razón, Jan. 13, 1919; La Época, Jan. 16-17 and 26, 1919; La Nación, Jan. 14, 1919. According to La Vanguardia, Feb. 7, 1919, many U.C.R. caudillos participated in the various collections and ceremonies honoring the fallen.

24

La Época, Jan. 22, 1919; La Vanguardia, Feb. 7, 1919.

25

Revista Militar, XIX (Jan. 1919), pp. 199-202; La Razón, Jan. 17, 1919.

26

La Época and La Prensa, Jan. 21, 1919.

27

Policía, Orden del día, pp. 832-834; Solemne homenaje de la Liga Patriótica Militar de Chile a la Liga Patriótica Argentina (Santiago, Chile, 1922), p. 16.

28

Victor A. Mirelmann, "The Semana Trágica of 1919 and the Jews in Argentina," Jewish Social Studies, XXXVII (Jan. 1975), pp. 72-73.

29

Clodomiro Araujo Salvadores, Secretary-General of the Liga Patriótica Argentina, Private interview, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Nov. 3, 1977; La Fronda, Jan. 12 and Mar. 24, 1920; La Protesta, Jan. 20, 1920.

30

La Prensa, Jan. 30 and Feb. 4, 1919.

31

Ibid., Feb. 2 and 28, Mar. 31, 1919. On the Liga's structure see Liga Patriótica Argentina, Estatutos (Buenos Aires, 1919), pp. 23-29.

32

Caras y Caretas, May 25, 1919.

33

La Fronda, Apr. 11, 1920; Solemne homenaje, pp. 18 and 33.

34

La Prensa, Oct. 26, 1946. Also see Pedro P. Maglione Jaimes, "Una figura señera -- Manuel Carlés," La Nación, Jan. 12, 1969. La Prensa, Apr. 6, 1919, gives the names of the other officers elected on April 5. The military, political, and business worlds were well represented in the Junta Central, as were the Catholics. One member of the Junta, Lorenzo Anadón, became president of the Unión Popular Católica Argentina in 1919 (see Chapter IV).

35

La Prensa, Feb. 4, 1919.

36

Liga Patriótica Argentina, Brigada 19 y 21, La verdad de la Liga Patriótica Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1950), pp. 6-7.

37

Romariz, La semana trágica, p. 171.

38

Caras y Caretas, May 25, 1919; the number of localities was given in La Fronda, Nov. 2, 1919. Unfortunately no statistics on Liga membership other than the Liga's are available.

39

Review of the River Plate, May 30, 1919; Rock, Politics in Argentina, pp. 195-196.

40

República Argentina, Congreso Nacional, Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, June 10, 1919, p. 429.

41

Review of the River Plate, July 25, 1919.

42

La Vanguardia, Mar. 2, 1919 and Oct. 31, 1920.

43

Rep. Arg., Diario de sesiones, June 10, 1919, pp. 432-433.

44

Liga, La verdad, pp. 7-8; Rock, Politics in Argentina, pp. 183 and 198; Romariz, La semana trágica, p. 171.

45

Solberg, "Rural Unrest," pp. 37-42; Carl Solberg, "Farm Workers and the Myth of Export-Led Development in Argentina," The Americas, XXXI (Oct. 1974), pp. 134-135.

46

The following information on the Villaguay incident comes from La Vanguardia, Feb. 15-21 and 24-28, and Apr. 3, 1921, and Rep. Arg., Diario de sesiones, Feb. 18 and 23, 1921, pp. 311-316 and 355-392, respectively. Little documentation exists on the Liga's violent operations. According to different historians and booksellers, the Liga either lost or sold its archive. Liga officials insisted to me on various occasions that the archive had either been burned or the police took it during the Perón years. A police official told me, however, that the police did not have any Liga papers.

47

Jews did, however, belong to the brigades of Gilbert, Aldea San Antonio, and Larroque, Entre Ríos. See Comisión de Propaganda de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, Primeros de Mayo Argentino. Conmemoración del pronunciamiento de Urquiza en Entre Ríos (Buenos Aires, 1921).

48

Marotta, Movimiento sindical, II, pp. 262-263.

49

The following account of the background to the worker-Liga conflict in Gualeguaychú is drawn from Comisión de Propaganda, Primero de Mayo, pp. 61-67. This pamphlet contains not only the Liga's version of events but clippings from the national and provincial press, some of which were hostile to the Liga.

50

"Estatutos de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, Gualeguaychú," n.d., Julio Irazusta, Private papers, Notebook I, Las Casuarinas, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

51

These principles of free labor were set down in Comisión de Propaganda, Primero de Mayo, p. 109.

52

"Estatutos, Gualeguaychú."

53

On the February 3rd celebration see Comisión de Propaganda de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, Humanitarismo práctico. La Liga Patriótica Argentina en Gualeguaychú (Buenos Aires, 1921).

54

On the events of May Day see Comisión de Propaganda, Primero del Mayo.

55

La Vanguardia, May 10, 1921.

56

Ibid; Antonio A. Giménez, Private interview, Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 1977.

57

See Borrero's La Patagonia trágica (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1957) and Bayer's Los vengadores de la Patagonia trágica, I-III (Buenos Aires, 1972-1974). Also see Biblioteca de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, El culto de la Patagonia. Sucesos de Santa Cruz (Buenos Aires, 1922); and Rock, Politics in Argentina, pp. 202-203.

58

Susana Fiorito, "Un drama olvidado: las huelgas patagónicas de 1920-1921," Polémica, 54 (1971), p. 110.

59

Solemne homenaje, p. 20.

60

Liga, Sucesos de Santa Cruz, p. 30.

CHAPTER IV
COMPOSITION AND SOCIAL THOUGHT OF THE
LIGA PATRIÓTICA ARGENTINA

The Semana Trágica, Villaguay, Gualeguaychú, Patagonia — these instances of repression gave the Liga Patriótica Argentina a reputation for brutality. As sober, respectable citizens, Manuel Carlés and other liguistas did not seem to fit in an organization conceived and nurtured in bloodshed. Members of the Liga, however, viewed their mission as patriotic, Christian, and necessary for the protection of society. Their predecessors included not only strikebreakers and vigilantes, but the Social Catholics and conservative reformers. Like these groups, the Liga hoped to end class conflict, and pursued this goal using a variety of means, violent and pacific. In this chapter the peaceful methods of class conciliation will be discussed, as well as the backgrounds of the men and women who found the Liga's goal attractive.

Formed to suppress class warfare, the Liga was composed of those social sectors most fearful of revolution. In a biographical study of 217 liguistas, including 146 brigade delegates to the annual congresses from 1920 to 1927 and 71 members of the Junta Central and Consejo Ejecutivo for these years, I attempted to find out the identity of these groups.¹ Information was found on 141 of the 217, although the only data available for 24 members were their professional

titles, which appeared along with their names in the records of the congresses. Only 116 of the 217 persons were mentioned in the biographical sources consulted. The fact that these works did not cite 46 percent of the group studied strongly indicates that the latter did not come from the highest socioeconomic sectors.

Persons with prestigious backgrounds tended to be bunched among the organization's leaders. Information was found on 92 percent of the Junta Central and Consejo Ejecutivo members, but only on 36 percent of the brigade delegates. Since the delegates usually were brigade presidents and officers, they probably enjoyed higher status than the brigade rank-and-file, who were not studied.² This was particularly true in the case of some brigades, such as those in rural areas, where landowners and foremen commanded the peon membership. Other examples of the same pattern were corporatist-style brigades which included employers and workers and presumably were headed by the first group.

The Liga's internal structure was highly stratified in accordance with the organization's belief in a stratified society as a whole (see Table I). About one-half of the national leaders studied belonged to the Jockey Club, a similar number were listed in prestigious social registers, and almost one-third pertained to the Sociedad Rural or local rural associations. The corresponding figures for brigade delegates were 4 percent, 10 percent, and 10 percent, respectively. If one equates upper-class status with one or more of these

Table I^k
Social Status of Liga Members

Junta Central	A. Membership in Jockey Club No.	B. Membership in Centro de Armas, Centro Naval, Círculo Militar No.	C. Membership in local social Arterina or other local society No.	D. Listed in social register No.	E. Total Persons in one or more (of A,B,C,D) (Particulars) No.	
					%	%
Corsair Eleutrezo (11)*	34	48	6	8	31	36
Presidentes from Brigades (14)	6	4	0	15	10	13
Total (31)	49	18	6	37	50	54

*Sources for all tables are found in the bibliographical section of the Bibliographia.
Unless otherwise stated, in all tables numbers given in parentheses represent total number studied, net number of positive
respondents.

affiliations, including membership in prestigious military clubs, about 70 percent of the Junta Central and Consejo Ejecutivo belonged to this class, in contrast to 18 percent of the delegates.

It would be useful to compare these statistics with ones relating to other contemporary political groups. Peter Smith provided information on the social status of deputies in the Chamber, by party, from 1916 to 1930.³ Smith's criteria for determining what he called "aristocratic" status differed slightly from mine; both of us relied on membership in the Jockey Club and the Sociedad Rural, but I also included local rural societies and military clubs for consideration. In addition, Smith used a panel of Argentine social scientists to judge which persons belonged to "known families," and instead I consulted social registers of the era. (Later in this chapter I used other sources on family backgrounds, but here I limited myself to this single indicator, which proved to be the most inclusive.)

Using Smith's terminology, 35 percent of the Liga sample were aristocrats, which would place them between local Conservatives (i.e. provincial parties affiliated to the pre-1916 régimen) at 44 percent and the Radical party, minus its more prominent Anti-personalist component (see Chapter V), at 31 percent. This ranking appears plausible, as the large number of brigades from the interior made the Liga comparable to an alliance of parties such as the local Conservaties. The figure of 31 percent for the Radicals seems surprisingly low. The corresponding proportion of aristocrats in the

Radical party from 1904 to 1915 was 64 percent,⁴ which suggests that the percentage declined over time and was therefore higher in 1919, when the Liga was formed, than it was by 1930. The slowly diminishing social status of the Radical party did not affect the rise of the Liga, but it greatly influenced the birth of later right-wing groups and will be discussed in that context.

The aristocratic component of the Junta Central and Consejo Ejecutivo corresponded closely to the 73 percent listed by Smith for the Conservative party of Buenos Aires. The leaders of the Liga, just as those of the Conservatives, numbered among the most prominent members of society. Not surprisingly, they also were some of the most economically powerful, as will shortly be seen. One should first determine whether this coincidence in status between Conservative deputies and Liga leaders signified that the two groups were indeed the same. The degree of overlap between the Liga and the Conservatives is difficult to measure because biographical sources often did not reveal party affiliation. Therefore I also attempted to find out when Liga members held office or were otherwise active in party politics. If it was before 1916, then they probably were not Radicals, who abstained from electoral politics till 1912. This way one can determine whether the person belonged to the Radical party or to the régimen, but not whether the person was affiliated to the Buenos Aires Conservatives, local conservatives, or the P.D.P.

Despite these limitations, some patterns emerged from the data (see Table II). Although some Radicals participated in the formation of

the Liga, as far as I can determine only two were included in the group studied. This amounted to less than 1 percent, as opposed to the 14 percent who clearly belonged to parties associated with the deposed régimen. Significantly, the two Radicals were delegates and possessed none of the "aristocratic" affiliations noted in the preceding tables. In contrast, at least 31 percent of the selected national leaders were in opposition parties. This strongly suggests that they did indeed represent the former political elite and that their Liga activity may have corresponded more to opposition maneuvering than to strict ideological concerns.⁵ Still, the same partisan motives probably did not apply to brigade delegates, who did not share the social and political prominence of the organization's leaders. One should also recall that the Liga initially operated in conjunction with the Radical administration and never officially constituted itself as an opposition party.

Returning to the topic of class membership, another measure of social prestige was the length of time one's family had resided in Argentina (see Table III). By this criterion, at least 12 percent of the delegates and 24 percent of the national leaders possessed high status, for their earliest known ancestors had arrived during the colonial period. These figures are markedly lower than those collected by Ezequiel Gallo (h.) and Silvia Sigal on Radical and Conservative candidates for office in 1916. Gallo and Sigal found that the forebears of 39 percent of the former and 47 percent of the latter

Table II
Political Affiliations of Liga Members;
Elected or Appointed to Office

	Non-U.C.R.			U.C.R.			Unknown Party			Non-U.C.R.		
	(Conservatives, P.D.P., Local Parties)	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	In Office 1916-1930	No.	%
Junta Central & Consejo Ejecutivo (71)	22	31	0	-	4	6	19	86	3	14	-	-
Delegates from Brigades (146)	8	5	2	1	4	3	6	75	2	25	-	-
Total (217)	30	14	2	0.9	8	4	25	-	5	17	-	-

Table III
Arrival in Argentina of Earliest Known Ancestor

had arrived before 1800.⁶ For 84 percent of the group I studied, however, I uncovered no information. This does not necessarily mean that all these families were of recent origin, but perhaps that few of them were important in the past.

Tables IV through IX contain information on the relationship of Liga members to the land. Almost one-quarter of the group studied and two-fifths of the leaders owned rural land or managed family estates. The actual proportion, however, was probably larger, as the sources focused to some extent on the littoral region and on major estancias.⁷ An additional 6 percent of the group studied belonged to landowning families but were not directly involved in agricultural production. Of the 52 persons who owned or managed estates, at least 11 controlled latifundia, defined as holdings of over 5000 hectares. Since the number 52 may underestimate the number of landowners, I added to it any persons who belonged to rural societies (recognizing that membership in these associations did not necessarily signify landownership) and arrived at a total of 62, or about 29 percent of the group studied. Again, the results were higher for leaders than for delegates: 48 percent versus 19 percent, respectively.

The utility of the figures on landownership is limited; in order to assess the wealth and status of property holders one should also know something about the quality and value of the land — information which cannot be provided at this stage of the research. As far as landownership and high social standing are concerned, it is useful to

Table IV
 Relationship of Liga Members to Land
 and Agricultural Production:
 Direct Access to Land (through ownership,
 managing of family estates, or agrabusiness)

	No.	%
Junta Central & Consejo Ejecutivo (71)	28	39
Delegates (146)	24	16
Total (217)	52	24

Table V
 Relationship of Liga Members to Land
 and Agricultural Production:
 Size of Property (in hectares)

		Under 501	501- 1000	1001- 3000	3001- 5000	5001- 10,000	Over 10,000	Unknown	Total
Junta Central									
&									
Consejo Ejecutivo	-	-	2	2	1	7	16	28	
Delegates	-	4	3	1	2	1	13	24	
Total	-	4	5	3	3	8	29	52	

Table VI
 Relationship of Liga Members to Land
 and Agricultural Production:
 Indirect Access to Land (closely related
 to landowning family, but not directly
 involved in production)

	No.	%
Junta Central & Consejo Ejecutivo	8	11
Delegates	4	3
Total	12	6

Table VII
 Relationship of Liga Members to Land
 and Agricultural Production:
 Direct and Indirect Access to
 Land Ownership and Management*

	No.	%
Junta Central & Consejo Ejecutivo	36	51
Delegates	28	19
Total	64	29

*See tables IV and VI.

Table VIII
Relationship of Liga Members to Land
and Agricultural Production: Direct,
or Indirect or No Access to Land

		SRA*			Neither		Total
		SRA*	Rural Society	Both			
Direct Access to Land:							
Junta Central &							
Consejo Ejecutivo	9	6	10	3	3	28	
Delegates	10	14	13	15	12	24	52
	1	8	3				
Indirect or No Access to Land:							
Junta Central &							
Consejo Ejecutivo	12	3	7	3	25	43	
Delegates	14	4	-	141	116	122	165
	2						
Total	24	21	16	156	217		

*SRA = Sociedad Rural Argentina.

Table IX
 Relationship of Liga Members to Land
 and Agricultural Production:
 Direct Access to Land and/or
 Membership in SRA, Rural Society

	No.	%
Junta Central & Consejo Ejecutivo	34	48
Delegates	28	19
Total	62	29

remember that the two were not always synonymous. One may note in Table VIII that 14 liguistas with indirect or no access to land belonged to the Jockey Club, while 15 persons who owned land belonged to neither the Jockey Club nor the Sociedad Rural. Both landowners and aristocrats were found in the Liga, but they were not necessarily the same people.

A variety of occupations were represented in the Liga, as indicated in Table X. The largest number of members were in the liberal professions, followed by ranching and agriculture or a combination of rural and commercial activities, and then by solely business pursuits. The percentage of delegates in business and the liberal professions was markedly lower than that of organization leaders in these occupations. In actuality these percentages were probably higher; many delegates were engaged in commerce and the professions in small localities and escaped notice of the porteños who compiled biographical dictionaries.

Military officers were strongly represented among the leadership: 18 percent of the members of the Junta Central and the Consejo Ejecutivo on whom information was found. The active participation of armed forces personnel and of high-ranking officers such as Domecq García has already been noted. Perhaps the only surprise in the data on occupations is the low number of priests, considering the continuities between the Liga and social Catholicism, which will be discussed shortly. Aside from the 5 priests who appeared in the study,

Table X
Principal Occupations of Liga Members*

Business (including employees)												Manual Worker or Service (Agricul- ture and Ranching Members)	
Commerce		Banking		Finance		Utilities		Manufactur- ing		Agriculture, Ranching		No.	%
Liber- al Profession- als (Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, Priest, Professor) No. (1,2)	Bureau- crat/ Bureau- crat/ Officer, Profes- sions No. (3,4)	Mili- tary Writer, Officer, Polit- ician No. (5,6)	Pub- lishing Real Estate No. (7,8)	Bank No. (9,10)	Finan- cial No. (11,12)	Uti- lities No. (13,14)	Trans- port No. (15,16)	Manu- factur- ing No. (17,18)	Business No. (19,20)	Agricul- ture No. (21,22)	Ranching No. (23,24)	No. (25)	% (26)
1	2	14	23	4	6	2	3	4	6	11	18	4	6
5	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Joint Central Office to Executive (G2) ** *													
Regular (G3)	4	17	27	5	8	3	5	1	2	4	6	2	3
Total (1,2)	5	31	25	9	7	5	4	5	4	15	12	6	5
For Total (1,2)	5	31	25	9	7	5	4	5	4	15	12	6	5

In the cases of military officers who were officers in the U.S. Army, the military was considered their principal occupation.

however, at least 11 other liguistas served in the Círculos de Obreros and other Catholic organizations and charities or wrote for Catholic newspapers.

The Liga claimed to have brigades of laborers — telephone operators, bricklayers, painters, shoemakers, carpenters, taxi drivers, peons, stevedores, bakers, beltmakers, firemen, cigarmakers, and metallurgical, electrical, sanitary, and railroad workers. Other than the brigades of peons, most of these were located in the federal capital, although some, such as the brigade of railroad workers of Rosario, were found in major cities of the littoral region. Included in the survey were 6 members of workers brigades: 2 from stevedores brigades, 1 from the beltmakers, 2 from bakers brigades, and 2 from taxi drivers brigades. Whether these men were genuine workers or employers, foremen, or strikebreakers is not clear.

Workers brigades were supposed to provide the same services as unions, such as job placement and mutual aid, and help secure better working conditions and economic benefits within the established order. Extolling the virtues of "free labor," a manifesto of a bakers brigade in the federal capital stated that its members recognized the right to strike against abusive employers but not against the capitalist system, in contrast to unions.⁸ The Liga viewed that type of protest as utopian, un-Argentine, and irrelevant to workers' lives. Except perhaps for some who had belonged to Catholic unions, few workers found free labor appealing; workers brigades were mainly composed of

strikebreakers or peons forced to serve in their patrón's private army. The scant mention of these brigades after the postwar strike period in even the pro-Liga newspapers suggests that this was the case.

The brigades of peons were discussed in the context of the Gualeguaychú incident, in which haciendados organized free labor battalions to take part in the events on May Day. An anarchist from southern Buenos Aires province described the formation of such groups for La Protesta. Although anarchism had not yet spread to his area, he reported, the Liga had. Its local consisted of ranchers and small tenant farmers, who insisted that their peons join the Liga in return for free meat and wine. The correspondent lamented the fact that anarchists could not afford such inducements. Two peon members admitted to him that they did not really know what the Liga was; all they knew was that their membership duties were to defend the fields from strikers during the harvest, and that the police would not imprison them for their activities. The author added that estancieros and farmers would hire only those laborers who belonged to the Liga.⁹

More coercive tactics were used in Patagonia to create workers brigades. After the army and its civilian supporters, including the Liga, crushed the unions, estancieros and foremen forced the vanquished workers into the ranks of free labor. Carlés interpreted these events in a different fashion, claiming that the unions had separated themselves voluntarily from F.O.R.A. IX and petitioned to join the

Liga, establishing over 200 brigades.¹⁰ Coercion may have also played a part in the formation of Indian brigades. According to Liga sources, Indians in Santa Cruz, Río Negro, Chubut, Neuquén, Los Andes, and Junín de los Andes organized brigades in 1919 and 1920. The Liga president's concern over the security of the Argentine-Chilean boundary, especially in the wake of the Patagonian strikes, aroused his interest in the Indian population of the frontier zones. Carlés hoped to "Argentinize" the Indians, improve their working and living conditions, and in the process strengthen Argentine defenses against Chile. The Liga would influence the government to build more schools in these areas and return former community lands to the Indians, most of whom had been reduced to the status of rural proletarians. The mechanism by which the Indians became incorporated into the Liga is not clear, nor is it certain that Indian brigades existed except in the imagination of Carlés and other leaders. According to La Protesta, Liga patrols forced about 300 Indian families from their homes near Lago Buenos Aires, Santa Cruz and appropriated their lands. The anarchist editors noted ironically that the Liga later claimed that these Indians had formed a brigade.¹¹

Given the limited nature of worker participation in the Liga, the middle and lower middle classes must have constituted its popular component, which was sizeable — at least the 46 percent of the entire group studied and the 64 percent of the delegates on whom no data was found. Like the upper class, they too had a stake in the status quo.

Economic hardship and the threat of revolution had sharpened their characteristic resentment of the proletariat and their fear of sinking into its depths. Professionals, teachers, independent businessmen and craftsmen, employees, and minor bureaucrats filled the brigades in the federal capital.¹² There also were brigades organized by profession, such as those of doctors, high-school teachers, and government employees. Carlés manifested particular interest in organizing teachers, from primary school instructors to university professors, and this interest was reciprocated. This was only natural, according to La Protesta; teachers shared an exaggerated notion of their status. More than other groups they found it necessary to distinguish themselves from the manual workers they despised, although both teachers and laborers were salaried employees.¹³ Carlés not only viewed teachers as likely recruits, but he was eager for the Liga to gain influence over the schools and to "nationalize" education. As far as Liga membership in the towns of the interior was concerned, the local brigade usually included the schoolmaster, the lawyer, the doctor, the merchants, the landowners, and the priest, if there was one.¹⁴

Middle-class adherence to the Liga meant a great deal to Carlés. Repeatedly he appealed to what he called "the forgotten class" in Argentina: the middle class of teachers and other professionals, employees, military officers, priests, small farmers, and merchants. One may point out that he was contradicting himself, since on numerous

occasions he claimed that no classes existed in Argentina at all. At any rate his rhetoric, as well as projects discussed in the annual congresses, such as that of a minimum salary and pension plan for various middle and lower-middle class occupations, attested to the Liga's interest (and success) in attracting members from these sectors.¹⁵

Table XI shows the geographical distribution of brigades represented in the group studied. For the most part, the distribution corresponded to population figures; the greatest number of delegates came from brigades located in the littoral region, the most heavily populated area. Mendoza, Tucúman, Santiago del Estero, and two Patagonian provinces were exceptions to this rule. Chubut and Santa Cruz sent more delegates than their population would seem to warrant, while Tucúman and Santiago del Estero represented the reverse of the Patagonian case. The fact that the distribution of brigades corresponded even more closely to the activities of organized labor than to population accounted for these seeming anomalies. Unions were more active and the incidence of strikes was higher in the littoral and in the extreme south than in most parts of the interior. Many inhabitants of poverty-stricken Santiago del Estero migrated seasonally to neighboring Tucúman to work in the sugar harvest. There, through debt peonage, police vigilance, and traditional paternalistic practices, plantation and sugar factory owners managed to control the labor force. The lack of other job opportunities in the economically backward

Table XI
Distribution of Brigades Throughout Argentina

Brigades Represented in the Group Studied	No. of Delegates Represented in the Group Studied	Population in 1920*	
		No.	National Rank
Buenos Aires (province)	54	62	2,409,000 1
Federal Capitol	35	40	1,738,000 2
Córdoba	10	11	834,000 4
Entre Ríos	10	11	475,000 5
Santa Fe	10	10	1,039,000 3
Corrientes	4	4	369,000 6
Chubut	3	4	30,000 22
Santa Cruz	3	4	10,000 24
Chaco	2	2	97,000 16
La Pampa	2	2	127,000 12
San Juan	1	2	134,000 11
Río Negro	1	2	54,000 20
Catamarca	1	1	108,000 15
La Rioja	1	1	84,000 18
Tucumán	1	1	349,000 7
Jujuy	1	1	85,000 17
Neuquén	1	1	38,000 21
Santiago del Estero	1	1	282,000 9
Total	105	168**	

*According to Vásquez-Presedo, *Estadísticas*, II, pp. 43-45.

**Twenty-two of the 168 persons belonged to the Junta Central or Consejo Ejecutivo, but at one time served as brigade delegates, and therefore are included in this table.

northwest further limited the possibility of unionization and strikes. Protest against the system of forced labor normally took the form of alcoholism, disorderly conduct, or flight.¹⁶ It is more difficult to explain why Mendoza, the eighth-ranking province in population, was not represented in the group studied. Delegates from four mendocina brigades participated in the congresses, but they were few in number. Perhaps labor conflicts were relatively unimportant in a province with many small- and medium-sized landholdings.¹⁷

The ages of Liga members in 1920 fit in with the organization's conservative image. Table XII reveals that while the Liga attracted males of different ages, the largest number were between forty and fifty years old, and the average age was forty-seven. To some extent age can be related to Mayer's ideological classification. If one distinguishes between the young, middle-aged, and elderly, the second category corresponds to the conservatives, who are well established economically and socially and benefit more from the existing order than do the other two groups in the party of order. They are interested in maintaining the status quo, and in order to prevent radical threats they will contemplate moderate reforms, if necessary. Mayer's definition of reactionaries as those tied to a pre-existing order also fits the elderly. Both groups often criticize present society as a deterioration of past conditions and favor the restoration of outmoded institutions and privileges. Finally, characteristics often attributed to youths are also attributed to counterrevolutionaries. Both may have

Table XII
Age of Liga Members in 1920*

Junta Central & Consejo Ejecutivo (45)	30 and under		31-40		41-50		51-60		61-70		71 and over		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Delegates (18)	3	7	6	13	16	36	10	22	8	18	2	4	45
Total (63)	9	14	10	16	20	32	11	17	10	16	3	5	63

*Average age = 47.

a stake in the present order but they have less to lose than other groups: the young, by virtue of their age, and counterrevolutionaries, by their insecure foothold in society. Like counterrevolutionaries, the young tend to cherish uncomplicated slogans and symbols, action for its own sake, and change — at least the appearance of change if not the substance. Evidence gathered on the ages of members of the European right supports these correlations.¹⁸ It must be pointed out, however, that the average age of Liga members was close to the average age of politicians in general; national deputies tended to be in their mid-forties and national senators in their mid-fifties.¹⁹

Another limitation on the utility of the age variable is the fact that information was found on only 28 percent of those studied. The data garnered from all the tables, however, go along with the image of the organization as a basically conservative one. This conclusion was especially true for the members of the Junta Central and Consejo Ejecutivo, who moved in the most exalted circles of society and who also set the dominant tone of the Liga. Reactionaries and counterrevolutionaries also participated in the Liga, but their role is more difficult to define. The influence of the former was limited, for the Liga was most active in areas which had experienced rapid economic development, and it responded to the interests of those who had benefitted from this growth and not those who had lost from it. The fact that the brigades were primarily middle and lower middle class in composition suggests that the Liga may have contained a

significant counterrevolutionary component. The resemblance between the lower middle-class blackshirt repression of workers in postwar Italy and brigade activities in Buenos Aires and other areas did not escape the attention of writers for La Protesta and La Vanguardia.²⁰ The discussion of ideology below will help clarify the nature of the organization.

One final category of membership remains to be discussed — the female. On numerous occasions Carlés announced that the organization he headed was the first in Argentine history to recruit women to the cause of the fatherland,²¹ although in reality females had participated in Catholic organizations and patriotic groups before the birth of the Liga. At any rate, women enthusiastically organized brigades, mostly in the federal capital and surrounding towns, but also in such cities as Mendoza and Rosario. There were three types of female brigades, each responsible to a different governing body. The brigades of señoras elected a Junta Ejecutiva, the brigades of señoritas chose a Comisión Central, and the female schoolteacher brigades were subject to the authority of the male Junta Central; a few women also belonged to male brigades. Female liguistas tended to belong to prominent families and to be active in Church organizations, and often they were married or related to organization leaders. Although Liga publicists insisted that male liguistas came from a variety of backgrounds, they frankly admitted that the females were from the alta sociedad.

Since they did not yet exercise the vote, women at this time had little opportunity for involvement in public life other than Church and

charity work. Hence the active participation of women in its functions made the Liga unique among political organizations, comparable only to the Socialist party. Ironically, in view of the Socialists' interest in recruiting women and female suffrage, La Vanguardia and also La Protesta cited Carlés's appeal for women as a sign of the Liga's imminent downfall; presumably the Liga was seeking out female members because it could no longer attract men.²² As the months and years passed and the Liga remained in existence, however, these newspapers gave up this line of reasoning.

The class origins and Church ties of the female liguistas reinforced the conservatism of the organization, a conservatism whose roots lay in the ideas of the moderate reformers and in the social Catholicism of the years preceding 1919. The names of men active both in these movements and in the Liga have already been noted. Liga members continued to participate in such institutions as the Museo Social and especially in the Catholic organizations. The continuity of ideas and concerns between the Liga and the other two currents was even more significant than the continuity of membership. Both types of overlapping were evident in Catholic and Liga activities after the Semana Trágica.

Before January 1919 there were discussions within the Catholic hierarchy over replacing the Liga Social Argentina with a new structure designed to coordinate all Catholic associations in the country. A committee of three, including Miguel De Andrea, was formed in 1917 to

study similar Catholic efforts in other nations and to draft statutes. The outbreak of Semana Trágica influenced the committee to finish its work quickly; the statutes were completed one month later. The new organization, the Unión Popular Católica Argentina (U.P.C.A.), arose at the end of April 1919. De Andrea explained the title in the following manner: union, because the group was anti-individualist; popular, because it was democratic and accepted people from all classes; Catholic, because the group was a universal one, not pertaining simply to one class or party; Argentina, because one of the group's purposes was "the invigoration of the nationality, and, more concretely, of Argentinism." The U.P.C.A. claimed to be working not for religious ends, strictly speaking, but social ones: to help the worker exploited by the excesses of capitalism or by the tyranny and hypocrisy of anarchism. It would carry out social welfare programs and raise the social conscience of Catholics. Lorenzo Anadón, treasury minister under Roque Sáenz Peña and past president of the Círculos de Obreros, headed the U.P.C.A., while other members of its first juntas included Fathers De Andrea, Franceschi, and Fasolino, Santiago O'Farrell, Alejandro Bunge, Atilio Dell'Oro Maini, Tomás Casares, and Samuel Medrano. Anadón, De Andrea, Fasolino, and O'Farrell belonged to the Liga, while Dell'Oro Maini, Casares, and Medrano became important nationalists.²³

De Andrea clarified the purpose of the U.P.C.A. to a reporter from Caras y Caretas. He denied that it represented a confessional

political party or a barrier to modern ideas; instead it responded to other motives. While maximalists, socialists, and other related groups were busily promoting revolution, Catholics were standing by passively, watching these advances without any resistance.

Organized forces must be opposed with organized forces The times demand it We find ourselves in a moment of struggle, and it would be unpardonable to stay unprepared.²⁴

The first and most important activity of the U.P.C.A. was the Great National Collection for Re-establishing and Consolidating Argentine Social Peace, held from September 22 to October 1, 1919. The proceeds of this immense fund-raising drive were to be spent on social welfare projects. De Andrea and Anadón were in charge of the Collection, and seven out of the eleven members of its financial committee were liguistas, as were many of its organizers and contributors. The broad purpose behind the Collection was, in De Andrea's words, "to help free progressive and orderly workers from the tyranny of revolution," to support the independence of workers who wanted to use peaceful methods and so-called "real syndialism" to better themselves.²⁵ One wonders, however, whether the committee wanted any kind of syndicalism at all. In its publication, La paz social, Franceschi wrote that unions were harmful because they promoted levelling by helping the numerous mediocre workers at the expense of the more able few; the latter were pressured into voting with the majority on all issues.

Given these views against majority rule, it is difficult to see how Franceschi could have accepted unions or even democracy.²⁶

In one issue of La paz social, an "honorable" worker was depicted breaking his chains with the Collection's aid — an ironic cartoon, considering Marx's famous exhortations to labor. Through such works as an office of social services, youth centers, rural cooperatives, a workers university, a female technical institute, and especially housing for workers, the committee hoped to promote popular wellbeing and maintain the social hierarchy. "Give and you will conserve" was the slogan of the Collection. As one committee member, Father Gabriel Palau, wrote in La paz social, the necessary "social counterrevolution" would be carried out peacefully through social works. According to another person active in the Collection, Gustavo Martínez Zuviría, socialism was an idealistic reaction against the misery caused by industrialization. The forces of order could not defeat it without marshalling other, greater ideals: the Argentines nationality and the concept of love and social justice from Christianity, untouched by liberal economic dogma. Through the Collection, the forces of order marshalled another resource to be used against the left — over thirteen million pesos.²⁷

The main portion of the funds was spent on housing, which most observers saw as the workers' most critical need. Four small neighborhoods of houses and apartments were eventually built, one of them along the lines of a "popular mansion," a complex of buildings which

included not only apartments but schools, libraries, kindergartens, a medical dispensary, and consumer cooperatives. In De Andrea's view, these institutions promoted discipline, cooperation, and morality among the inhabitants and helped erect "the real bulwarks of social defense . . . in the neighborhoods."²⁸

While the Collection was taking place, the Liga was organizing itself and formulating its own ideological alternative to revolutionary doctrine, which it disseminated in publications, annual congresses, and speeches, some of which were given in churches on Sundays. Carlés and others gave this ideology different names: Argentinism, practical or political morality, practical Christianity, practical humanitarianism, and even "catechism of the fatherland doctrine." In describing the Liga's ideology I shall use only one of these terms — practical humanitarianism — and, unless otherwise stated, I will draw upon the speeches of Carlés.²⁹ Although other speakers voiced the organization's principles, Carlés was the most eloquent and by far the most prolific.

Carlés valued cultural and national diversity and resisted the use of universal generalizations to interpret Argentine society. If forced to apply a theory, however, he stated that he would choose the positivist one of progress as the development of order, for this principle had accounted for the great success of Argentine economic growth. The population had respected the foundations of Christian civilization — property, family, and authority. In return, each member of society had been assured of certain basic rights, among them,

social equality, which Carlés defined as equality before the law and the privilege of all inhabitants — rich or poor, male or female — to belong to the Argentine people, or pueblo. In his view, social hierarchy was thoroughly consistent with social equality. Argentines were also entitled to live, work, and acquire goods with the earnings from their labor. Notably absent from Carlés's list of the rights of man was liberty — liberty of thought, speech, religion, association, or political action. Admittedly, at other times Carlés mentioned liberty, but these times were relatively few and he never defined the term clearly, except when he mentioned "liberty of work", meaning the "right" not to belong to a union, or what he called the "illusory liberty" sought by the left. The key to Argentine progress in the past and in the future, he believed, was working in peace, observing the laws which guaranteed to all the fruits of their toil.

This meant that all Argentines should accept the given order. Indeed, to Carlés "seeing the world as it is" was a "moral" belief which formed the backbone of the "positivist philosophy of possible well-being," or practical humanitarianism. The latter consisted of:

the science of the good and . . . the habit of the truth: the truth that teaches one to know things as they are, and the good which advises one to follow the dictates of loyalty.³⁰

When one looked at real life one found that there were and always would be some human beings who were weak and others who were strong, some

rich and others poor, some intelligent and others ignorant, some employers and others employees. The Liga did not attempt to change reality but to enhance the welfare of the populace insofar as conditions permitted, with all members of society retaining the position for which they were qualified. The practical and moral person believed that laws should be created both to curb the powerful and to prevent the weak and ignorant (i.e. the lower class) from controlling society — and to guarantee jobs for all workers so that they could support their families and acquire property. By striving to attain these goals, the Liga could perform a legitimate and useful function.

Carlés criticized the "immoral" followers of the left for persisting to see the world as they wanted it to be, from the perspective of remote and exotic theories. They attacked the foundations of society by dishonoring legal authority and the family and by viewing property as theft and the natural hierarchy as unjust. In contrast to the Liga's practical humanitarianism, their utopian humanitarianism could not be translated into reality. The former consisted of satisfying the workers' legitimate desires for economic betterment, which the Liga had stripped of theoretical trappings. Thus the Liga had converted the left's "illusory liberty" to "practical equality."

The Liga also opposed the left's view of class divisions with its view of national divisions. The real world consisted of nations which through the centuries had acquired distinct cultural and linguistic traditions. Ignoring these natural boundaries, the left

divided the world into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This arbitrary belief in class only served to disunite the homeland and did not correspond to national reality. Classes per se did not exist in Argentina; the proper definition of workers included not only those who were supervised by a foreman but all who produced. Carlés offered his own "argentine" definition of labor and capital; labor was nothing more than capital which produced goods and services and capital was accumulated labor. (The fact that Marx would have agreed with his definition of capital would have surprised and upset him.) In his words,

Here without exception, all started out as workers and wound up, through the virtues of saving and perseverance, as proprietors and wealthy men.³¹

The possibility of upward mobility precluded the need for conceptions of class.

Holding these views enabled liguistas to feel justified in calling their first annual meetings "Congresses of Workers," to the amusement of the left-wing press, which noted the presence of "worker" delegates such as women in plumes and men with silk hats.³² The Liga did, however, admit to some distinctions between workers. Jorgelina Cano, president of the Comisión Central de Señoritas, explained that there were "laborers of the mind and of the muscle," but they shared the same aspiration — to maximize production so as to maximize earnings.³³ One could also cite the gulf between the landowner and the

peon, but the traditional network of reciprocal obligations and loyalties between the two transcended this gulf. Thus the radical who incited workers against their employers undermined national customs.

The Liga offered its practical humanitarianism as an alternative to revolutionary thought and practice. It preached that the latter was false because it had originated in Europe, where large industries and trusts operated unchecked, countries were overpopulated, and huge extremes of wealth and poverty were found. Given these conditions, it was perhaps understandable that an ideology of class conflict would grow there. A foreign ideology could not apply to the Argentine situation, however, which varied markedly from the European: no industrial concentration and virtually no native capitalism, extensive empty stretches of land, food and livelihood for all, little or no class divisions. While it was true that there was little native-owned industry, these supposed "differences" between Argentina and the European nations reflected the Liga's rather idealized view of conditions in the former.

Carlés attributed the tendency to criticize Argentine society and imitate foreign ways to the diversity of "races" in Argentina. A half century of hard work, optimistic spirit, faith, and harmony between employers and employees had laid the foundations for Argentine development — but then the immigrants arrived and chipped away at these foundations. (Carlés overlooked the fact that the immigrants had

provided the manpower necessary for economic development.) The newcomers represented the cast-offs of a decaying continent — social delinquents, orphans, men without a fatherland — and they brought with them the problems of their native lands, including class hatred. These "sons of hostile races" sought to impose foreign beliefs such as atheism, skepticism, pessimism, the theory of class divisions, and "frenetic humanitarianism" upon a society different from the one in which these views had grown.³⁴

Argentina had entered a stage of conflict between emulators of foreign customs and loyal nationalists. Carlés admitted that Argentines had always adopted foreign ideas when advantageous to do so, as in science and economics, but he argued that immigrants wanted to forsake all local traditions. In this stage true Argentines would have to defend themselves against foreign imitations: the economic individualism which enslaved the worker and the labor unionism which tyrannized the community for the benefit of one group. The Liga was the repository of Argentine optimism, founded in the morality of work and the Christian faith, which opposed the pessimism and sterile utopianism of the dregs of Europe. The Liga also stood up against other foes: atheistic cities with their sensual, aristocratic clubs, stock exchanges with their speculators, greedy political parties, and theoretically minded congressmen. Since sensual aristocrats, speculators, and greedy politicians were not absent from the Liga, however, these villains received little more than occasional tongue-lashings

as punishment — nothing compared to the repressions in Entre Ríos or Patagonia.

The inconsistencies of practical humanitarianism were legion. With respect to Liga optimism and immigrant pessimism, the true positions of the two groups were really the reverse of what liguistas asserted. The Liga was, perhaps, optimistic about Argentina's future but pessimistic about the nature of human beings. As Mayer has noted, conservatives believe that man is irrational, selfish, and sinful, and that the task of society is to tame his violent instincts.

It does so by subjecting him to a complex network of roles, norms, customs, traditions, beliefs, rituals, and prejudices. All these social relations and arrangements are organically interlocked as well as divinely and historically consecrated. To change or rearrange any one of these pillars is to endanger the entire edifice, thereby risking the neglect of essential human needs and the eruption of dormant human passions.³⁵

The Liga stressed family, religion, education, legal authority, and patrón-peon ties, for these institutions and relationships imparted discipline, obedience, and other traits necessary to maintain order. In its view, human beings were inherently and irrevocably unequal, mentally and morally, and stratification was both inescapable and just; any attempt to destroy the natural social hierarchy could only lead to chaos.

In contrast the Liga's opponents held an optimistic view of human nature. Leftists believed that all persons are born with equal

abilities, but only those with the means to do so are allowed to develop their talents. Thus, men and women are perfectible, for their class affiliation and not their inherent nature accounts for their attainments. The destruction of the class system would liberate human beings by releasing their potential for self-improvement.

Another flaw in the doctrine of practical humanitarianism lay in the Liga's identification of leftism with foreigners and its denigration of the latter. Not all radicals were foreigners; one could be Argentine and still protest against social inequities. The editors of La Protesta delighted in noting those instances when most of the participants in a strike or "revolutionary plot" were native-born.³⁶ The Liga itself was hardly 100 percent Argentine, and nowhere less so than in Patagonia, where foreign-born landowners and foremen often commanded brigades. Carlés considered these the "good foreigners," the exceptions to the rule. In this regard one should note that Carlés prided himself on never having worked for a foreign company — an achievement not shared by other liguistas, whom La Vanguardia accused of belonging to the "Liga Patriótica Anglo-argentina."³⁷ The Liga criticized leftism as a foreign doctrine and yet admitted that Argentines had legitimately borrowed foreign ideas to benefit the country, although some of them, such as economic liberalism, had turned out to be pernicious. Evidently some foreign concepts and persons were acceptable but not others. Furthermore, the whole argument of foreign versus national was questionable on other

grounds; who could prove what was Argentine and what was not? All institutions and beliefs considered traditional — Catholicism, the class structure, private property, and so on were originally foreign imports.

Everywhere the party of order sees the left as alien. If the Liga called the Argentine left foreign, the French right considered its leftist opponents to be German. Even if it is not foreign in terms of nationality, the left is foreign to the right's mythical and utopian vision of society, and it is despised and feared because it threatens the class structure. Moreover, its distaste for internationalism notwithstanding, the Liga contacted similar groups abroad in order to coordinate campaigns against the left: the American Legion, the Chilean Liga Patriótica Militar, the Orgesch (Organisation Escherich) and the Freie Vereinigung des Arbeiter of Bavaria, the Ligue Civique of France, the Liga Nacionalista Brasileira, and the Liga Patriótica de Unidad y Defensa Nacional of Bolivia.³⁸

Since the Liga believed that Argentine development was unique, it postulated that Argentine problems required Argentine solutions; "foreign" solutions should be rejected. Rather than embrace foreign radicalism, the laboring classes should seek inspiration from the national reality. This meant that the laborers should work hard in order to develop the economy and create prosperity for all. Immigrants should emulate the discipline, submissiveness, and contentment which characterized the Argentine workers — according to the Liga. Finally,

laborers should accept the ideas of evolutionary change through constitutional means and allegiance to the nation rather than those of sweeping change through revolution and ties to the international proletariat.

Nowhere were the ideals of practical humanitarianism demonstrated more clearly than in the programs of the female brigades. The women's function in the Liga was an extension of their religious and philanthropic labors. Their mission was to emulate the "white Christ" of love, as against the "red Christ" of hate.³⁹ They carried the Liga's message to the working class through peaceful means: the brigades of señoras, through social welfare services, and the brigades of señoritas, mainly through education. Realizing the difficulty of wooing male workers away from radical doctrines, the señoritas followed the example of De Andrea and Franceschi and concentrated their efforts on their sisters in the working classes, setting up schools for them in factories and workshops.

The schools for female workers had two purposes, the first being simply to help improve the position of working women by teaching them basic skills. The other was, in the words of one woman, to "dispell the ignorance which subjected them to others": not to men but to subversive elements, who exploited their lack of knowledge for the cause of disorder.⁴⁰ Carlés and De Andrea opposed feminism, which Carlés defined as "the fight against men in order to masculinize women and feminize men."⁴¹ To the party of order, family was a pillar of

society, and therefore any change in family structure, such as that portended by female liberation, represented a threat. Nevertheless, given the subsistence problems of working-class families, the Liga and the Church recognized that some accommodations would have to be reached. As De Andrea noted, the ideal situation would be for women to rule the home and not work in "inappropriate" places such as offices and factories. Since the ideal was untenable at this time, however, women should at least be able to work with dignity and professional competence.⁴²

The Liga hoped that a nationalist education would end the supposed subordination of women to subversives and enable the women to Argentinize their families. In this manner the schools would transform "the hatred of the working class into the friendship of the workers for their patrones and benefactors."⁴³ The nature of the schools was, in Carlés words, "exclusively Argentine." They were designed to inculcate female laborers with Catholic piety and such Argentine values as nobility of work, love of country, duties toward the fatherland, and deference towards one's betters. In contrast to the materialistic and atheistic education which Carlés claimed was spread in the public school system, the Liga factory schools imparted morality, religious faith, and even the virtue of happiness. The schools also offered instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and homemaking arts, all infused with heavy doses of patriotism. Distributed to students was the magazine Agathaura, published by the brigades of señoritas and

devoted to strengthening the family and the nationality. It was hoped that pupils would disseminate their knowledge at home and would raise their children to be "good Argentines." Whether the Liga successfully propagated nationalism in this fashion is difficult to determine, but, at any rate, by 1927 it claimed to have taught almost 10,000 female students.⁴⁴

The Argentinization of women factory workers in Liga schools formed only part of the program of practical humanitarianism. Peaceful opposition to class conflict was also manifest in other social undertakings of the brigades.⁴⁵ Throughout the 1920's the brigades of men and married women established employment services, free medical and legal facilities, day care centers for children of working mothers, public libraries, and sales of meat and other popular consumption items at cost. Education remained a matter of special concern, as brigades founded schools for children and workers in the federal capital and as far away as northern Santa Fe province. Workers schools took the form of trade institutes; the school of the electricians brigade in the federal capital also offered aid in job placement and apprenticeships for orphans. One of the more interesting Liga activities was its annual exposition of woven and embroidered goods from the northwest, hosted by the brigades of señoras. Its object was to stimulate national industry, the prosperity of the Indians and of the interior, and interest in traditional Argentine handicrafts.⁴⁶ The Liga claimed to have a labor arbitration board, but La Protesta cast

doubt on its impartiality, insisting that the inevitable result of Liga mediation was the entry of strikebreakers.⁴⁷ Finally, the Liga hosted fund-raising affairs whose proceeds went to a variety of charities. With these types of concrete measures the Liga hoped to divert workers from the class struggle. To round out the picture of Liga activities one must add the speeches, lobbying efforts, gatherings, parades, celebrations of national holidays, plaques awarded to policemen and soldiers, and, of course, "defense" functions.

The Liga hierarchy recognized that broader means were necessary to assure social peace. In the annual congresses its members and guest speakers debated rural and urban problems and the merits of such curative measures as social security, a national labor code, non-revolutionary labor unions, public housing projects, and the cooperative movement. These discussions resembled the ones found in the pages of the Boletín del Museo Social Argentino and the Revista de Economía Argentina; indeed, some of the men who delivered papers at Liga congresses also wrote articles for these journals. The Liga exercised a stricter editorial policy than these two periodicals. It insisted that all speakers relate the topics to local circumstances and interpret them with an "Argentine criterion."⁴⁸

Land reform and economic nationalism were matters of special concern for the Liga. José Serralunga Langhi, the spokesman for rural cooperatives and member of the Chacabuco, Buenos Aires brigade, noted that private property was a pillar of Christian civilization. Property

ownership gave one a sense of self worth and a stake in the present order; the worst enemies of Bolshevism were landholding peasants. Dividing large holdings into smaller ones and facilitating their sale to small farmers would create a large antileftist constituency.⁴⁹ According to Carlés, it was no accident that most of the postwar agrarian disorders had occurred in latifundia zones of Córdoba and Santa Fe. He thought that Argentines should follow the example of the Italian Fascists, whose land reform program was enlarging the peasant class. In order to prevent the recurrence of agrarian conflict, there should be "no land without an owner, nor worker without land."⁵⁰ The Liga had another reason to be interested in the countryside. Like the cultural nationalists, its members believed that the campo was the storehouse of Argentine traditions and virtues, in contrast to the decadent, cosmopolitan cities. If practical humanitarianism could not be implanted here, where could it thrive?

This large issue of land reform encompassed several smaller issues, one being the latifundia question. Most speakers defined latifundia as oversized estates, but they did not explain their criteria for determining what was too large. A dissenter from this viewpoint and member of the Junta Central, Alberto Castex, insisted that the term meant large slices of unproductive land. Since the great estates in Argentina were very productive, only the huge stretches of state-owned property could be considered latifundia. This led Castex to conclude that

the antilatifundista campaign is exotic in the Argentine Republic; it responds to a rationalist and imaginary concept and not to objective reality.

He thought that the small proprietors tended to be less knowledgeable than the large ones and hence produced less. Therefore to increase the number of smallholders was purposeless.⁵¹

Castex did not explain the role of speculation or account for the productivity level of small farms. His views represented one extreme among liguistas, although many others agreed with him on the subject of the tenants' or peons' supposed incapabilities. Admiral Juan Pablo Sáenz Valiente of the Junta Central, a latifundista from Entre Ríos, noted the tenants' laziness and blamed the miserable state of rural dwellings on their "perverse" egoism. To his credit, however, Sáenz Valiente also admitted that landowners shared the blame for the tenants' situation.⁵²

A member of the brigade of Posadas, Misiones, Secundino Ponce de León, believed that reform would succeed only if work were made obligatory for the "naturally indolent" criollos. Despite the obstacles in its path, agrarian reform was needed to relieve the poverty which existed in the northeast before agitators took advantage of it in order to propagate their ideas. Although Ponce de León insisted that the Guarani-speaking peons of Corrientes and Misiones were content with their situation, he admitted that the debt peonage system which tied them to their labors was cruel. In his opinion the "Turkish

intermediaries" were the main cause of this abuse, but the latifundistas also bore some of the blame. It was essential to alleviate the peons' lot and yet insure that they would continue to work. Selling them small plots of government land on credit might be the answer.⁵³

Other Liga members echoed the theme of the evil intermediary; it was easier to blame the anonymous corporation or the foreign go-between than the powerful Argentine landowner or the system of agricultural production. Serralunga Langhi considered the rural merchants and colonizing companies which rented land to farmers and sold them goods to be their worst enemy. The rural cooperatives were designed to end this problem; the landowners would rent their land directly to the cooperative for no less than five years and only for cash payments, and the farmers would also buy their supplies at cost through the cooperative.⁵⁴

Several liguistas stressed the need for subdividing the land among those who worked it, but only rarely did they explain how this would be accomplished. The most radical plan was offered by Juan Patalagoyti, president of the brigade of Balcarce, Buenos Aires. He excluded the possibility of expropriation because compensating the present owners and creating the necessary bureaucracy would be too expensive and because Argentina lacked experience in instituting such reforms. Instead he proposed several different measures, the first of which was to organize all land sales under public auction and to divide the land for sale into lots large enough to support a family.

A deposit of one-quarter of the purchase price would be required, and the rest would be financed with a government loan. Patalagoyti would also restrict the inheritance of land except if it passed directly from one generation to the next; such legacies, however, would be taxed heavily, as would absentee-owned estates. National or foreign corporations would be prohibited from owning land and would be forced to give up the property they held. The growing corporate monopoly over land presented "a constant threat of social disturbance." Foreign companies exemplified an additional danger because they drained wealth from the countryside and from the nation. Patalagoyti had formulated a far-reaching plan — albeit in ultimate defense of private property — which resembled the Socialists' land reform platform. The Socialists themselves recognized the similarity between some of their programs and those of the Liga, complaining that they had advocated popular libraries and night schools, for example, long before the liguistas had "discovered" these issues.⁵⁵

Probably only a minority of Liga members would have agreed completely with Patalagoyti's solution to the land question, but many shared his unfavorable opinion of foreign enterprises — at least, in rhetoric. The fact that some of them were foreign-born businessmen or worked in foreign-owned concerns did not prevent Liga members from criticizing foreign capital and foreign influence. To Carlés, economic nationalism was inseparable from the need to protect Argentina against foreign radicals. He lamented what he perceived as Argentina's lack

of adequate social and economic defense: social, because the immigration laws did not keep out foreign undesirables, and economic, because the country's economy was subordinate to control from abroad.

. . . just as foreign capitalism can freely exploit the national riches, spoiling and extinguishing them, so too does the extremist, universalist, anarchist and terrorist illusionism that its countries of origin exiled and evicted . . . insure the rebirth of hatreds and rivalries, commit crimes, spread the vices and disseminate the immoralities and diseases that this undesirable humanity carries with it.⁵⁶

Other liguistas pointed out the danger of foreign economic influence. Eduardo T. González of the twenty-sixth brigade of the federal capital announced to the eight annual Liga congress that "We are being left behind!" He noted that after decades of rapid growth, the Argentine economy was stagnating; the main impediment to further progress was its dependency on the economies of the great powers in whose service it operated. Argentina would have to follow the example of other nations which, although less well endowed with resources, had pulled themselves out of subservience.⁵⁷ An outside speaker, one M. F. Dribue, observed that other countries were confining Argentina to economic slavery by keeping the balance of trade in their favor, and that Argentina could strike back only by preparing to control its own destiny.⁵⁸ As to how Argentines would free themselves economically, a variety of answers were proposed: public investment funds, tariff protection, government controls on foreign business, stimulating the

processing of foods and other national products, and creating a national meat-packing company with regional branches, meat markets, a river fleet, and a system of warehouses abroad.

An industrialist who belonged to the forty-third brigade of the federal capital, Florentino Martín, found it depressing to contemplate the dearth of Argentine industry and what he considered the limited mentality of Argentine workers. Martín and other liguistas hoped that profit-sharing and other devices could be used to benefit laborers economically and enable them to appreciate what had thus far eluded their understanding — the dilemmas of industries in developing nations, and how strikes aggravated these problems.⁵⁹ On the subject of profit-sharing, Juan Oyuela of the fifth brigade of the federal capital observed that in the small factories of the past, capitalists and laborers had interacted on a basis of friendship and respect. Now a great distance existed between them; capitalists treated laborers as machines and the latter saw the former as their exploiters. The gap would be closed only when the two groups realized that their interests were the same; capital was accumulated labor and labor was the source of capital, and whoever tried to turn one against the other was the enemy of both. There were three possible types of relationships between capital and labor: the contractual, which presently existed, in which workers agreed to sell their labor to employers for a certain salary, the socialist, and the coparticipative, in which labor and capital shared the profits and losses. Oyuela considered the last one as the solution of the future.⁶⁰

Many Liga members found profit-sharing attractive; the commission of economic affairs of the first annual congress officially endorsed it.⁶¹ Arturo Pallejá of the Junta Central offered his conception of the form profit-sharing should take at the fourth congress in 1923. He advocated the organization of all members of society into corporations as the best means of insuring social equilibrium. Within this context, the workers corporations would eventually become the factory owners by purchasing company stock with funds subtracted from laborers' salaries. Transformed into a mere instrument of labor, capital per se would be retained under this system, and the true exploiter of society and of the worker — usury or speculative capital — would be eliminated. A workers parliament would be responsible for economic legislation; this body, however, would be subordinate to a political parliament in which labor as such would have no voice. Pallejá assumed that once they were emancipated economically, workers would have no need or desire for political emancipation. He did not explain what would happen to the former factory owners or to the landholders. His views on "productive" versus speculative capital, corporations, and labor's right to a share in the profits but not to political power approximated the ideas and practices of European fascists.⁶²

Few liguistas contemplated making such radical alterations in the existing system in order to preserve its essentials, although, Tomás Amadeo, for example, proposed a more democratic form of corporatist system.⁶³ Carlés's views on the subject of corporation were ambivalent.

On the one hand, he believed that syndicates of workers and employers would be artificial institutions in Argentina. On the other hand, on at least two occasions he characterized Argentine democracy as a false one, pointing out accurately that only a minority of the nation's inhabitants were registered voters, and half of this small number constituted the so-called democratic majority. He did not suggest that women and foreigners be given the vote in order to change the situation. Instead, in the seventh congress in 1926, he urged the formation of new groups of citizens to supersede the corrupt political parties and the election of "Argentines", as distinguished from Radicals, Socialists, Conservatives, and so on. The Liga would help promote these new civic groups, as it had previously helped spread nationalism.⁶⁴ Presumably Carlés hoped that it would form one of these new groups and come to power, but this appeal went unheeded.

Still, the Liga never officially opposed mass democracy. Its spokesmen rarely came out against universal male suffrage, perhaps because they perceived that governments elected by the nonimmigrant masses — in this case, the Radical regime — did not necessarily oppose properties interests. If labor activism and the political and economic effects of World War I made them lash out against workers, these conditions were short-lived and they did not force Liga members to seriously question the political system. On the contrary, they conceived their actions to be in its defense. Opposition to this system would characterize the forces of order at the end of the 1920's after the heyday of the Liga Patriótica Argentina.

Notes

1

The 217 persons studied were chosen as follows: I compiled a list of all brigade delegates and Junta Central and Consejo Ejecutivo members who participated in the congresses, and I picked every eighth name. The year 1920 marked the first annual congress, while after 1927 the congresses declined in importance, and it is difficult to find records of their proceedings. Sources for all tables are found in the biographical section of the bibliography.

2

The membership lists and proceedings noted in Brigade 19 of the Federal Capital, Minutes of meetings, 1926-1930, Liga Patriótica Argentina, Buenos Aires, Argentina, tend to confirm that this was the case in urban areas. This course was not available to me at the time I compiled the biographical study. I am grateful to Clodomiro Araujo Salvadores for allowing me to use it.

3

Argentina and the Failure of Democracy, p. 31. The two sets of data are not completely analogous because one deals with internally elected members of a political group and the other with internally nominated, popularly elected officials who belonged to political parties. Nor do the time periods coincide, although they do overlap. Nevertheless, the comparison is suggestive.

4

Ibid., p. 30.

5

This was asserted in La Vanguardia, Apr. 1, 1919.

6

Gallo and Sigal, "La formación," p. 166. Gallo and Sigal did not indicate what political offices they were referring to, nor did they explain their methods.

7

Main sources on landownership included the following: biographical dictionaries, addresses given for members of rural societies in their rosters, the Archivo de La Prensa, catastral publications, guides of stockbreeders and ranchers, and commercial reference works. For exact citations see the biographical sources in the bibliography.

8

La Fronda, Mar. 15, 1920.

9

La Protesta, June 14, 1922.

10

Liga, Sucesos de Santa Cruz, pp. 29-30.

11

La Protesta, Feb. 15, 1923. Also see La Prensa, Jan. 28, 1920, and La Vanguardia, Jan. 29, 1920.

12

Brigade 19, Minutes.

13

La Protesta, Jan. 31, 1920. Teachers were also important in European and Brazilian fascism. See Juan J. Linz, "Some Notes Toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective," in Fascism, A Reader's Guide, ed. by Laqueur, pp. 63 and 68.

14

Araujo Salvadores, interview.

15

La Protesta, Apr. 24, 1923; La Fronda, July 1, 1920; Primer Congreso, pp. 221-222. Full citations for the annual congresses appear in the bibliography under Liga Patriótica Argentina.

16

Donna J. Guy, "The Rural Working Class in Nineteenth-Century Argentina: Forced Plantation Labor in Tucumán," Latin American Research Review, XIII (1978), pp. 135-157.

17

On landownership in Mendoza see William J. Fleming, "The Cultural Determinants of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development: A Case Study of Mendoza Province, Argentina, 1861-1914," Journal of Economic History, XXXIX (Mar. 1979), p. 222.

18

On the affinity between youth and fascism see Linz, "Some Notes," pp. 43-47. In age and social status the Liga closely resembled the civil guards which sprang up in early Weimar Germany, which James M. Diehl characterized as "essentially bourgeois-conservative" in Paramilitary Politics in Weimar Germany (Bloomington, 1977), pp. 55 and 66-67.

19

Darío Cantón, El parlamento argentino en épocas de cambio: 1890, 1916 y 1946 (Buenos Aires, 1966), p. 47.

20

See especially La Protesta, Nov. 6, 1919.

21

See for example La Fronda, Nov. 1, 1919. In general, information on Liga activities comes from the daily press releases found in La Fronda and La Prensa, especially 1919-1921.

22

An example is found in La Protesta, Oct. 29, 1919.

23

Pensamiento cristiano, pp. 84-87, 98-99; Zurretti, Nueva historia eclesiástica, p. 393.

24

Caras y Caretas, Apr. 26, 1919.

25

On the Collection see Pensamiento cristiano, pp. 81-91, 105-108, 135; La Fronda, Oct. and Nov. 1919.

26

Comité Ejecutivo de la Gran Colecta Nacional, La paz social (Buenos Aires, 1919).

27

La Fronda, Oct. 2, 1919.

28

Pensamiento cristiano, pp. 105-108.

29

The following (pp. 210-17) on the Liga's ideology is compiled from: Liga, Humanitarismo práctico, pp. 18-21; Biblioteca de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, Catecismo de la doctrina patria (Buenos Aires, 1921), pp. 3, 8, 12-17; Definición de la Liga Patriótica Argentina (guía del buen sentido social) (Buenos Aires, 1921), pp. 20-21; Primer Congreso, pp. 37-44; Tercer Congreso, pp. 23-35; Quinto Congreso, pp. 35-40; Séptimo Congreso, pp. 60-63.

30

Tercer Congreso, p. 23.

31

Séptimo Congreso, p. 60. Also see the remarks of Celestino F. Gutiérrez, Octavo Congreso, pp. 291-296.

32

La Protesta, May 24, 1924. After the third annual congress the name was changed to "Nationalist Congress" or "Nationalist Congress of Workers."

33

Tercer Congreso, p. 35. The Nazis employed a similar phrase — workers of the "hand and brain." See Max H. Kele, Naxis and Workers. National Socialist Appeals to German Labor, 1919-1933 (Chapel Hill, 1972), pp. 10 and 43-44.

34

Liga, Humanitarismo práctico, p. 19; Tercer Congreso, p. 26.

35

Mayer, Dynamics of Counterrevolution, pp. 52-53.

36

For example, see its issue of Mar. 23, 1920.

37

May 24, 1924. Also see Maglione Jaimes, "Una figura señera."

38

La Fronda, Apr.-June 1920; Ambassador to Argentina Frederick J. Stimson to Acting Secretary of State, Despatch No. 1422, Dec. 21, 1920, U.S., Department of State, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Argentina, 1910-1929, General Records, Decimal File, M514, Microfilm Roll 20, 835.43L62.

39

Solemne homenaje, p. 35.

40

See the speech of Elisa del Campillo in Comisión de Señoritas de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, Sus escuelas de obreras en las fábricas (Buenos Aires, 1922), p. 4.

41

Octavo Congreso, p. 57.

42

Pensamiento cristiano, p. 111.

43

Solemne homenaje, p. 18.

44

Comisión Central de Señoritas, Memoria de diez escuelas obreras, 1924 — mayo — 1925 (Buenos Aires, 1925), pp. 45-46, and Memoria, 1927 — mayo — 1928 (Buenos Aires, 1928), p. 5; Carlés's speech in Octavo Congreso, pp. 44 and 57.

45

On these activities see daily press releases in La Fronda and La Prensa; Brigade 19, Minutes; Solemne homenaje, pp. 30-32.

46

For example see Comisión de Bellas Artes, Brigadas de Señoras de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, Discursos pronunciados en el acto inaugural y veredicto del Jurado de la Tercera Exposición Nacional de Tejidos y Bordados, 1-15 julio 1922 (Buenos Aires, 1922).

47

La Protesta, June 14, 1923.

48

Octavo Congreso, p. 19.

49

Primer Congreso, pp. 166, 172.

50

Congreso General de Territorios Nacionales, p. 41. Also see his remarks in Quinto Congreso, pp. 39-40.

51

Primer Congreso, pp. 201-203.

52

Ibid, pp. 205-206.

53

Cuarto Congreso, pp. 355-367.

54

Primer Congreso, pp. 166-168.

55

Séptimo Congreso, pp. 177-190; La Vanguardia, June 15, 1924.

56

Noveno Congreso, p. 79.

57

Octavo Congreso, pp. 203-206.

58

Congreso General de Territorios Nacionales, p. 115.

59

Primer Congreso, pp. 173-174.

60

Cuarto Congreso, pp. 268-271.

61

Primer Congreso, p. 198.

62

Cuarto Congreso, pp. 82-107.

63

Amadeo, La función social, pp. 112-123.

64

Séptimo Congreso, pp. 61 and 69-72; Sexto Congreso, pp. 40-41.

CHAPTER V
"LET'S ORGANIZE THE COUNTERREVOLUTION":¹
THE NEW FORCES OF ORDER

In 1935 Carlés proclaimed that from 1919 to 1924 the Liga "tranquilized the public spirit," from 1924 to 1928 it guided the nation's social conscience, and from 1928 to 1933 it defended Argentine liberty.² The Liga has continued to implement practical humanitarianism until this day. Despite the prominence of its leaders, however, after the mid-1920's its role changed and it began to fade from the public eye. Slowly the initiative was shifting to other groups whose origins also dated back to 1919 and which called themselves "nationalist." In this chapter I will trace the evolution of the right from the Liga, a movement dominated by conservatives, to the rise of new groups which sought dramatic social and political changes, as well as examine the ideological influences on these groups.

Symbolic of the continuity between the Liga and the newer organizations was the fact that the former co-hosted (with Círculo Tradición Argentina) a series of four talks given by Leopoldo Lugones in July 1923. Later published in a book entitled Acción, these lectures exemplified Lugones's final transformation into a spokesman for the extreme right. Here the Argentine D'Annunzio³ summoned his countrymen to a glorious war against the evil foreigner. Lugones declared that he was the friend of the honorable immigrants who had

worked for the nation's greatness and the enemy of those who had brought discord from overseas, disturbing the peace and harmony which had reigned in the country and abusing Argentine hospitality. This discord had been manifested most notably in the Vasena strike and the turbulence which followed. Far from evidencing any desire for economic improvements, the workers had created these disturbances in the interest of revolution. War had to be declared against these rebels; it would not be a civil war but a national war of Argentines against aliens.

These words merely paraphrased those of countless Liga speeches. Lugones then expressed a new sentiment. He saw foreign leftism as half of a double threat against national unity, the lack of Argentine military preparedness constituting the other half. The war had demonstrated the absurdity of his former pacifism and antimilitarism. In order to defend the nation against external foes, ideological or territorial, the people would have to assert their love for the fatherland and rally behind the armed forces. This meant supporting increases in military strength and uniting in spirit with the military. Carlés agreed with Lugones but for him this stance seemed perfectly consistent with his view of a constitutional democracy. Lugones did not hide his new-found distaste for this system, denouncing the "electoralism," bloated public budget and bureaucracy, and increased corruption which he believed accompanied the rise of democracy. (One congressional critic of Lugones remarked sarcastically that it was easy for a highly paid bureaucrat to oppose enlarging the bureaucracy. Stung, Lugones

retorted that he had not received the job he held through favoritism but through hard work — a dubious claim.⁴⁾ That democracy stifled the martial virtues he admired was a belief which emerged more clearly in subsequent works.

Alongside the Liga another movement was growing which attacked not only socialism and anarchism but the foundations of liberal democracy — something which the Liga may have done in practice but never explicitly articulated. That leftism threatened individuals of varied backgrounds is evident; that the existing form of government represented a danger is more difficult to understand. The explanation can be found in the economic and political conditions of Argentina in the 1920's.

The economic climate of the postwar years had been a gloomy one, while that of the years 1922 to 1929 was marked by fluctuation. A period of recovery lasted from mid-1922 to 1925, followed by a year of depression in 1926, another recovery from 1927 to October 1929, and then the Great Depression. Largely determined by international market conditions, these cycles manifested the dependent nature of the Argentine economy. In general agricultural production expanded somewhat during these years, but much more slowly than before the war. The small remaining amount of accessible, high-quality land that could be brought into cultivation, the lack of any major investment program to raise productivity, and uncertainty over the market limited the expansion of agriculture. Unrecognized by most contemporary observers, the golden age of the export economy was coming to an end.⁵

During this period the export of chilled beef assumed preeminence over that of frozen and conserved beef. The prosperity of the chilled beef industry, however, did not suffice to arrest the decline of the livestock sector in general; the prices of meat (other than chilled beef), wool, and other livestock products remained stable or declined, with a resulting decrease in the value of exports. As far as grain production was concerned, from 1921 to 1924 the value of exports increased almost 50 percent.⁶ In 1925 and 1926 their value dropped abruptly, but prices rallied until the onset of the Depression, when they entered a period of steady decline before reaching a trough in 1933.

Industrial production rose, although not dramatically, from 1922 to 1927, led by the petroleum, metallurgical, and meat-packing sectors. Investment from abroad and from the Argentine government (the latter, in petroleum), the raising of tariff barriers in 1923, and the renewed importation of industrial machinery after the war helped stimulate industrial growth. The United States began to assume the financial role hitherto occupied by Great Britain; between the years 1923 and 1927 North American investment more than doubled, while that of the British increased only 5 percent and that of other countries remained about the same. The amount of British investment in 1927 was still over four times that of the North American, but the latter was increasingly concentrated in the newer, more dynamic areas of the economy, such as manufacturing.⁷ The level of investment remained high from

1927 until 1929 and then fell sharply; industrial development for the most part continued from 1927 to 1931, albeit at a slower pace than the preceding four years. This period also witnessed a spurt of corporate growth, with the number of sociedades anónimas quadrupling and their capital tripling from 1928 to 1933.⁸

As the decade wore on the inflation rate, a wartime legacy, slowed to a halt, and by 1928 real income kept in pace with the cost of living. Still, wages in Argentina were relatively lower than those in Europe, and this factor influenced the shift from the seasonal to permanent immigration which took place at this time. Approximately one million immigrants settled in the years 1920 to 1930.⁹ As a result of repression and the economic crisis of the early 1920's, the labor movement diminished in numbers and militance. As inflation receded and incomes rose, laborers had less cause for dissatisfaction than in 1919, and this factor may also have discouraged participation in unions. The number of strikes and strikers dropped from 367 and 309,000 in 1919 to an annual average of 90 and 70,000, respectively, for the years 1921 to 1928, and this average would have been lower if not for one huge strike in 1924.¹⁰ Meanwhile, union membership in Buenos Aires diminished to less than 5 percent of the male labor force by 1921; F.O.R.A. IX lost two-thirds of its dues-paying members from 1920 to 1921. In 1922 this federation disbanded and was replaced by the Unión Sindical Argentina (U.S.A.), a syndicalist organization which refused to cooperate with other labor and leftist groups or with the

government. Its tiny membership reflected the low level of working-class militance during much of the decade.¹¹

Never very large or cohesive before the 1940's, the labor movement at this time was extremely fragmented. Unopposed by a united labor federation, the Radical party was able to make inroads into working-class barrios, offering services and patronage to their inhabitants in exchange for support. This represented a change from previous tactics; formerly Yrigoyen and his associates had directly cultivated relations with unions. Still, even during this period of weakness some unions were active, particularly those of railroad and municipal workers, who in 1926 formed the Condeferación Obrera Argentina (C.O.A.). With a membership of about 70,000, C.O.A. was the most important labor federation of the second half of the decade. The Socialist-leaning C.O.A. and the syndicalist U.S.A. merged in 1930 to form the Confederación General de Trabajadores (C.G.T.), ushering in a new period of Argentine labor history.

The fragmentation of the labor movement was matched by the fragmentation of the political left. In 1915 Alfredo Palacios split off from the Socialist party, partly because of his nationalism but mostly because of his independent personality, to head the Argentine Socialist party. Inspired by the Russian Revolution, other Socialists formed the International Socialist Party, which adhered to the Third International and evolved into the Communist party in 1920. The divisive Socialists split again in 1927 to form the Independent Socialists, who will be mentioned later.

If the proletariat constituted less of a threat to the social order than it may have in 1919, nevertheless, that order seemed to be changing. In order to understand this change one must look at the nature of the Radical party and its governmental programs. The Radicals accepted the socioeconomic system of Argentina — the agrarian export economy, with its class hierarchy and its dependence on the foreign market — and showed little if any inclination to modify it. The social measures they supported were moderate in character: the income tax, the nationalization of oil, limited land reform, some industrial tariffs. None of these programs won congressional approval — largely because the opposition controlled the Chamber until 1920 and the Senate through the period — except for the tariff, which passed under the rule of Marcelo T. de Alvear. A scion of an old family who was perhaps more familiar with Paris than with his native country, Alvear represented the aristocratic wing of the Radicals. Although it is often portrayed as reactionary, in contrast to the "progressive" Yrigoyen administration, the Alvear presidency broke with the Sociedad Rural on such issues as the tariff, while the Yrigoyen regime was virtually the latter's captive.¹²

Yrigoyen was not interested in socializing the means of production but in providing opportunities for middle-class advancement, hampered by an economic system which fostered maldistribution of income and structural unemployment. The dependent middle class sought upward mobility through access to the professions and the bureaucracy.

Yrigoyen demonstrated his willingness to aid the middle class in this quest by implementing the proposals of the University Reform movement, creating autonomous university governments in which professors, students, and alumni shared control. The effects of this and other innovations on the quality of higher education were mixed. For the purposes of this narrative, the most significant result was the opening of faculties and administrations to the middle class.¹³

Members of the middle class were also entering the bureaucracy. It was reported that Yrigoyen created anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 jobs in national government in the federal capital during 1921-1922 alone, but it is difficult to substantiate this figure.¹⁴ At any rate, many contemporaries believed that the federal bureaucracy was expanding rapidly and that the middle class was taking over positions which once would have gone to men of more prestigious origins. La Fronda and other conservative organs constantly ridiculed Radical appointees to office for their lack of proven ability, education, and "good manners." They were not willing to recognize that the middle class had been excluded from opportunities to acquire training, experience, or the proper social graces. The only way to insure that democracy was instituted and that members of the middle class obtained these skills was to admit them to universities and to administrative positions — a step which much of the political class and upper class bitterly opposed.

The middle class was also making inroads into the Radical party organization. After 1900 Yrigoyen had begun to recruit precinct

leaders from the descendants of immigrants. In the internal party elections of 1918, about one-half of those chosen had non-Spanish names; many persons in the other half may have been the offspring of Spanish immigrants.¹⁵ Other evidence indicates that members of the middle class were increasingly being elected to public office.

Peter Smith classified only 31 percent of the Radical deputies in the Chamber from 1916 to 1930 as "aristocrats," compared to 53 percent of the P.D.P. and 73 percent of the Conservatives. This figure for the Radicals represented a significant drop from previous years, a drop accounted for by a split in the party. A small group of Radicals, the Antipersonalists, left the party in 1924 in opposition to Yrigoyen's strong control. The highest proportion of aristocrats among deputies was found in the Antipersonalist group — 75 percent.¹⁶

Smith concluded that a broad consensus linked Conservatives with Radicals on matters of economic policy. What, then, distinguished Alvear from Yrigoyen, and the Conservatives and Antipersonalists on the one hand from the Personalists on the other? What made the latter, in both instances, seem more progressive than the former? In the case of the parties, the difference in social composition is one answer; in both instances, the impact of their policies on the middle class was the other. Alvear's appointees were of noticeably higher social origins than many of Yrigoyen's, particularly in the latter's second presidency. Also, in one of his few policy divergences with Yrigoyen, Alvear tried to cut federal spending and the bureaucracy.

After the first few years of his administration, however, he relaxed his budget-trimming efforts, for by 1925 federal expenditures resumed their climb.¹⁷

The Personalists' economic nationalism can be explained in the light of their attitudes toward the middle class. Members of this faction implicitly realized that the government could not enlarge the budget and the bureaucracy indefinitely without new sources of revenue. Eventually the nation would have to industrialize in order to stimulate the economy and insure wider employment opportunities. Federal economic monopolies could perhaps accomplish this task; the nationalization of oil would provide patronage jobs and profits could be exploited directly by the government.¹⁸

The significance of Yrigoyen's stance on middle-class mobility can now be summarized. The reformers in 1912 had intended to widen the political system to include all native-born or naturalized adult males, which in effect meant the middle class. The régimen had hoped that the middle class would limit its political participation to the mere exercise of suffrage, thus preserving the boundaries between the political class and the rest of the political system. Increased middle-class access to education, the bureaucracy, the political parties, and public office, however, threatened the old political order. Not only was the political class expanding to include the new officeholders and party members from below, but some of these arrivés had entered the political elite itself. Furthermore, Yrigoyen was

attempting to perpetuate Radical party domination (and, thus, this state of affairs) through such means as provincial interventions. The justification for these repeated interventions was that the local allies of the régimen were monopolizing political rule through fraud, and the only way to bring democracy to the provinces was to expel these cliques from power. From the viewpoint of the old political elite, the price of democracy was too high. Yrigoyen's enormous victory in the presidential campaign of 1928 seemed to confirm the Radical stranglehold on power. The popular mandate for Radical actions showed the stupidity and greed of the masses in electing "mediocrities" and "demagogues." (The fact that the old elite had monopolized power before 1916, without popular consent, was conveniently forgotten.)

One might ask why the prospect of a vacation from power was so threatening to some members of the political class. One might even question the notion that democracy entailed the Conservatives' ruin, considering their power in the Senate. In order to understand the dimensions of this threat, one must take account of the relationship between the political system and the socioeconomic structure. Under Radical hegemony, the political system increasingly failed to reflect the economic or social distribution of power.¹⁹ Furthermore, although the Radicals were wedded to the status quo, they were attempting to redistribute wealth within the system by providing jobs for the middle class and financing them through deficit spending. Increased deficits resulted in increased foreign indebtedness, which appeared to spell

difficulties for landowners desirous of a balanced budget and balance of payments equilibrium in order to protect exports and facilitate cheap credit. Thus the upper class and the middle class collided on the issue of government spending.²⁰

Members of the régimen feared the accumulation of political power by individuals of lower social origins. It was not only a matter of losing employment but of losing favors and opportunities in a broader sense; economic spoils in Argentina had always been highly dependent on political ties, as in the case of the land distributed after the Conquest of the Desert. For certain members of the political class, moreover, the mere loss of employment engendered genuine resentment. Some of these individuals came from old prominent families whose wealth had declined and thus faced need. Others had devoted themselves to intellectual pursuits and thought that their rank and abilities entitled them to public employment, as would have been true in the past. The economic crisis of 1929 only added to their fears of displacement. As the depression continued and Argentina's drop in stature became clear, they identified their sinking fate with that of their homeland.

Many of these young upper-class intellectuals were heavily influenced by the Church. Catholics had long been involved in youth activities; for example, Gustavo Franceschi and Atilio Dell'Oro Maini participated in a young congress of 1908 which resulted in the creation of the Centros Católicos de Estudiantes in 1910. A lawyer favoring the

income tax and profit-sharing, Dell'Oro served as a government functionary, Secretary General of the Asociación Nacional del Trabajo from 1918 to 1932, and a member of the Liga. He took part in the founding of several Catholic youth journals in the 'teen's and also headed the Liga de la Juventud Católica, under the jurisdiction of the U.P.C.A.²¹

In response to the University Reform movement, the Federación de Estudiantes Católicos was formed in 1917 in Córdoba. The Federación claimed to support the Catholic and patriotic Argentine tradition against the anticlericalism and leftism of the reformers. In its view, the proposed changes would threaten the pillars of tradition, authority, and hierarchy which bolstered the society. The reformers also hoped to open the universities to new ideas and theoretical approaches tainted with Marxism; this, too, threatened Catholicism and the present order. The organization was unable to prevent the reforms, and its statements presaged those of Catholic and nationalist youth groups to come.²²

One of the aims of the Collection in 1919 was to give financial support to youth organizations. As De Andrea said, the installation of social peace required carrying the message not only to workers but to young people, who would in turn influence the masses. Dell'Oro Maini, Tomás D. Casares, Rafael Ayerza and others had founded the Ateneo Social de la Juventud in 1917 with the purpose of inculcating youths with Catholic values, and the Ateneo received aid from the Collection. Ayerza and Casares came from prominent (and pious)

estanciero families and eventually became nationalists. The journal Signo, published during 1920 and 1921, reflected some of the same concerns as the Ateneo.²³

Catholics were making other attempts to create educational institutes.²⁴ In 1910 they established the Universidad Católica de Buenos Aires and tried — unsuccessfully — to have it incorporated into the Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires so that its students could receive official degrees. The fledgling independent university collapsed in 1920. Some of those who had participated in Signo and in the Ateneo, such as Dell'Oro Miani, Ayerza, and Casares, along with the Catholic scholar César Pico, helped found the Cursos de Cultura Católica in 1922. The Cursos attracted students who wished to supplement their secular education with the study of Catholic philosophy. These included such future nationalists as Mario Amadeo, Federico Ibarguren, Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Nimio de Anquín, Julio Meinvielle, Samuel Medrano, Guillermo Gallardo, and many others, plus a few Catholics of an older generation, such as Emilio Lamarca and Ernesto Padilla.

The founders and students of the Cursos wished to disassociate themselves from established Catholic circles, which they saw as dried-out and bourgeois. Years later one of the participants recalled that they had been dissidents, inclined toward tradition and toward the right, but dissidents from the establishment nonetheless. The Cursos had given his generation a spiritual home; the weekly meetings

of Convivio, a discussion group led by Pico, reinforced these feelings of intellectual and personal comradeship.

The Cursos and Convivio were reflections of the Catholic revival in France which had begun after the separation of church and state in 1905. The effort which Catholics had previously expended on combatting this program was released for other endeavors: Biblical studies, religious thought, and manifestations of spiritual fervor.²⁵ Many of those involved in this Catholic renaissance had reconciled themselves with the French revolutionary heritage and supported liberal democracy, but others found nationalism, monarchism, antiliberalism, and antirationalism attractive. To numerous Frenchmen and Argentines, Charles Maurras epitomized these four currents.²⁶ It would be useful to examine the thought of the man who exerted the single strongest influence on the right-wing forces emerging in Argentina after the Liga's heyday.

One of Maurras's many Argentine admirers, Julio Irazusta, believed that he was a distinguished patriot and the greatest French statesman of recent years, and that his system

contains luminous explanations of the most recent historical reality, and it is a magnificent model for conservative action.²⁷

Above all else Maurras venerated his country. To him the fatherland was a concrete entity made up of blood, soil, and history with a life of its own and a right to protect its existence and freedom of movement.

Citizens owed their allegiance to the fatherland regardless of its shortcomings. Maurras exhibited this belief in his fight against the Dreyfusards; French security and strength mattered far more than Dreyfus's innocence or guilt. Since the Dreyfusards' accusations were weakening the military and the state, their cause was unjust and harmful.

Maurras thought that France reached its zenith under the Old Regime. The hierarchical and hereditary system of estates, the Church, the family, the guild, the monarchy, and other mediating institutions tempered the destructive individualism of human beings and thus maintained order and harmony in society. Vital in the maintenance of order was the Church, which through its Romanized version of Christianity introduced classicism to Europe. The product of Judaism, Jewish (non-Romanized) Christianity, German Protestantism, and German tribalism, the Revolution destroyed the system responsible for French glory. Maurras believed that these five forces shared a barbaric and anarchic stress on individual liberty and on monotheism, which represented two heads of a single danger;

. . . If, in this naturally anarchist consciousness, the feeling is allowed to germinate that it can establish direct relations with the absolute, infinite, and all-powerful being, then the idea of this invisible and distant master will quickly deprive the consciousness of the respect it owes to its visible and nearby master: it will prefer to obey God rather than men.²⁸

Christianity itself, or at least the non-Catholic version, formed part of the emancipatory process which was ending the domination of some men over others; it too was suspect. The doctrines of the essential goodness of man, political liberty, equality, and fraternity which also pertained to this emancipatory process were anathema to him, as, of course, was the Marxist ideal of liberating humanity from the bounds of nation and class through the proletarian revolution. Maurras thought that liberalism and Marxism were linked in the same general revolutionary process and that one led inexorably to the other. Since liberal democratic republicanism had in his opinion damaged the nation more than Marxism, Maurras reserved most of his criticism for the former.

The emancipatory process was responsible for French decay. Lifeless and utopian abstractions such as liberty and democracy assumed precedence over the wellbeing of the nation, over the natural and historical reality of the land, families, and tradition. In contrast to the glorious pre-1789 monarchy, democratic society was ruled by demagoguery, money, greed, and anarchic public opinion. A government composed of the best minds and scions of the oldest families offered the only guarantee of good administration. Unlike democratic plutocrats, the elite would govern in the best interests of the people. The fact that the most glorious period of French history had occurred under the Old Regime justified a return to that system.

What prevented France from re-embracing its "natural" form of rule? Maurras believed that outside enemies were responsible. Indeed,

the whole emancipatory process was foreign, being essentially German and Jewish. Maurras did not use these terms to refer to a specific religion or group of individuals. Anything which he believed threatened the unity and strength of France was Jewish or German: Marxism, international finance, monopoly capitalism, anticlericalism, or antimilitarism.

His definition of what was foreign and what was native to France, as well as his idealized conception of the Old Regime, were abstractions just as the liberal principles he lambasted. Moreover, Maurras never explained how he would reconcile his political system with the demands of a modern economy. He nonetheless considered himself a keen observer of concrete reality. Julio Irazusta recognized the flaw in Maurras's thought; the latter believed that politics was the science of the particular and was irreducible to a system, but he had gone ahead and created his own system.²⁹ Still, his Argentine admirers applauded his impassioned defense of the nation's interests against liberals, democrats, foreigners, plutocrats, mediocre officials, Jews, and recién llegados. It is not difficult to understand his appeal for the young intelligentsia of distinguished lineage whose talents were rejected by Yrigoyenist democracy.

Maurras was read and discussed in the *Cursos* and in *Convivio*, along with such contemporary authors as Ortega y Gasset, Spengler, Unamuno, Chesterton, Maeztu, Pégy, and Bloy.³⁰ Articles by these and other authors were found in Criteria, a biweekly periodical which began

to appear in March 1928. It was destined to become the most prominent and the longest-running Catholic journal in Argentina. Under the editorship of Dell'Oro Miani, the publication's literary and artistic offerings represented the latest currents, and its political, social, and philosophical commentaries reflected the influence of counterrevolutionary thinkers. Its writers were obliged to formally reject Maurras's teachings, for in 1926 the Pope had condemned him for subordinating religion to politics and converting the former into the latter's servant. Still, the writers of Criterio continued to voice sentiments similar to those of Maurras and often expressed admiration for Mussolini, an admiration reinforced by the Duce's good relations with the Church.³¹

One of the clearest expressions of these beliefs was Manual Gálvez's article "Interpretation of dictatorships."³² The fact that the modern counterrevolutionary dictatorships were only found in Greco-Latin countries (he was writing in 1928) did not signify to Gálvez that their inhabitants despised liberty or lacked the knowledge to be free. Starting with the Italian fascist regime, the modern dictatorship represented the first stage of a return to the classical principle of politics: order and equilibrium, reason, Roman law, and the primary of the spiritual over the material. The dictatorial form of government was only a means of restoring classical politics -- granted, a violent means, but drastic methods were necessary to bring about

a new revolution, founded in principles opposite to those which animated the French Revolution and its derivates socialism and bolshevikism.

Other nations like Germany and England were not dictatorial because their political systems corresponded closely to the classical model and their societies were stratified in a hierarchical manner. It was possible for Saxons and Anglo-Saxons to be revolutionary in theory and conservative in practice — witness the behavior of the German Social Democrats — but this was impossible for romantic and excitable Latins. Therefore in Latin countries it was necessary to take extreme measures to quash the revolutionary spirit.

Some of the contributors to Criterio were leading figures in the Cursos and in Catholic circles, such as Dell'Oro Maini, Casares, Pico, Gálvez, Bunge, Cafferata, and Julio Meinvielle; two converted Jews, Jacobo Fijman and Julio Fingerit, and the future literary eminences Eduardo Mallea and Jorge Luis Borges, were also on the staff. Some of these figures, along with other contributors — Ernesto Palacio, Rodolfo and Julio Irazusta, Juan E. Carulla, and Samuel W. Medrano — played important roles in the emerging nationalist movements. Nationalism will be defined more exhaustively later on in the narrative; at this point it will suffice to note that it was Catholic, elitist, antiliberal, antidemocratic, and heavily influenced by the currents being described.

The innovative prose and poetry which graced the pages of Criterio insured its downfall. They were incomprehensible to most of the

periodical's readers.³³ Complaints were made to the Curia, resulting in Dell'Oro Miani's resignation and the departure of the more modernistic vanguard in 1930. Under the new editor, Enrique P. Osés, the periodical embraced a more intelligible style, but its editorials continued to reflect an elitist, antiliberal viewpoint.

Free from clerical interference, exiles from Criterio published their own organ, Número, from January 1930 until December 1931. If under their influence Criterio had been accessible to few, Número was accessible to hardly anyone. This was in keeping with its collaborators' view of the need for hierarchy and the rule of an educated minority. Its staff included Fingerit as editor and Gálvez, Fijman, Casares, Palacio, Pico, Mallea, and some newer faces who would also be found in the ranks of nationalism: Nimio de Anquín (soon to declare himself a fascist), Frank Chevalier Boutell, and Jorge Attwell de Veyga. Although they quickly declared themselves partisans of the Church in its condemnation of Maurras,³⁴ the influence of the latter and of counterrevolutionary thinking on them was marked. In the first issue, Palacio proclaimed the "hour of Joseph de Maistre," one of the earliest critics of the French Revolution, who concluded that its abuses were worse than those of the Old Regime. According to Palacio, his criticisms had been prophetic: that liberty meant the tyranny of the mob, that equality negated heroism, genius, and saint-hood, that fraternity was anarchy, and that democracy signified spiritual and material ruin. Those nations which hoped to save

themselves from disaster would have to restore Maistre's antidemocratic principles.³⁵

Another Catholic group served as a training ground in ideas for many young nationalists --- Baluarte, which arose at the end of 1928.³⁶ Its founders, Mario Amadeo, Luis G. and Juan Carlos Villagra, and Alberto Ezcurra Medrano, were joined by Federico Ibarguren, Francisco Bellourd, Máximo Etchecopar and others who later achieved prominence in right-wing movements. Although the group met in the same building that housed the Cursos and had Meinvielle as its chaplain, it was much more politically oriented than the former. Amadeo later described his comrades as "profoundly traditionalist," although not yet consciously nationalistic. Baluarte proclaimed itself Hispanist, corporativist, and Thomist; it despised the liberal democratic order and hoped to eradicate it.

This aim closely resembled that of a new periodical, La Nueva República (henceforth LNR), with whose editors the members of Baluarte were closely linked. While LNR writers such as Carulla and the Irazustas were inspired by Maurras, however, Baluarte adherents admired the French royalist but would not follow a man condemned by the Church. Instead, they claimed the Frenchmen Maistre and Louis de Bonald and the Spaniards Juan Donoso Cortés and Juan Vásquez de Mella as their philosophical forefathers. Another early critic of the French Revolution, Bonald shared many ideas with his friend Maistre, while Donoso Cortés was the foremost conservative ideologue during the reign of

Isabel II (1833-1868). To prevent the danger of socialism, he believed that a modernized version of the traditional system of Church, social hierarchy, and authoritarian government was necessary. In the 1890's Vásquez de Mella attempted to reconcile the ultrareactionary Carlists with modern times — an exceedingly difficult task. Under his influence the Carlists softened their rigid stance on restoring all aspects of the Old Regime; they now favored the installation of a limited monarch aided by a corporatist assembly and the Church.

The emphasis on French sources of inspiration was not unusual for Argentine intellectuals of any stripe, but to claim a Spanish heritage was only now becoming acceptable. The works of cultural nationalists such as Manuel Gálvez, an unabashed Hispanist, were breaking the former porteño resistance to assimilate the national past. The visits in 1928 of Ortega y Casset, whose articulate elitism found a mouthpiece in César Pico, and of Ramiro de Maeztu in particular, helped arouse interest in Spanish thought. The editors of LNR greeted Maeztu's arrival in 1928 as ambassador to Argentine with praise for the Spain of Primo de Rivera (the current prime minister). They saw Maeztu as the person who could help reunite Spain and Spanish America into a community of Hispanic nations devoted to common aspirations.³⁷ Maeztu frequently met with the Irazusta brothers and with participants in the Cursos. Many of the ideas expressed in his famous Defensa de la hispanidad (1934) emerged from these tertulias; according to Julio Irazusta, the Argentines influenced him far more in their admiration of Spain than he influenced them.³⁸

The right wing that was emerging in the late 1920's was indebted not only to Catholicism, Maurras, and Hispanicism, but to Lugones as well. A young nationalist, Federico Ibarguren (son of Carlos), stated years later that he and his friends were not fascists but lugonianos, who differed greatly from each other. In a unique metaphoric fashion, Ibarguren expounded on this theme:

Fascism as a theory was engendered in an intellectual's laboratory from socialist sperm — totalitarian and laic — of the nineteenth century; in contrast, Argentine nationalism nourishes itself from the old Hispanic cult of personality, where the Catholic tradition germinates like a well-watered seed in the land.³⁹

While it was true that fascism had some leftist roots, Ibarguren failed to recognize those of Lugones and of Palacio, Carulla, and others. If Argentine nationalists had followed Lugones faithfully, then they would have been totalitarian and laic; the atheistic Lugones cared nothing for Ibarguren's Catholic tradition, although he was the exception to the rule among nationalists. Personalism influenced both fascism and Argentine nationalism; the Führerprinzip and the adoration of the Duce were also manifestations of personality cults. Ibarguren may have been correct in saying that he and his comrades were not fascists, but not for the reasons he gave.

Still, Lugones exerted an important influence on nationalism. His militarism and his opposition to liberal democracy have already been noted. These beliefs achieved fame in December 1924 when he called for

the recognition of force as the basic reality underlying society and as the only sure means to prevent social dissolution. Force meant authority, which in turn implied social, political, and cultural hierarchy and the enforcement of strict discipline. Only the army could maintain these values; hence "the hour of the sword" has arrived.⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, many military officers found Lugones's thinking congenial, and the Círculo Militar published his speech.

In La organización de la paz (1925) Lugones provided one of the earliest right-wing diatribes against electoral democracy to appear in Argentina. The votes of all citizens in a democracy were considered the same; all persons were to be treated identically according to the abstract theory of equality. This was just as absurd as saying that one insect and one elephant were identical because there was the same number of each. Since the weaker were more numerous than the stronger, democracy favored the former:

satisfying, thus, the paradoxical piety that pursues the triumph of the most inept in life . . . that piety is the fundamental virtue of Christianity; generous illusion . . . that carries 2000 years of failure in the face of inexorable and incomprehensible life.⁴¹

This piety, which he also called "pessimistic mysticism," assumed an ecumenical character which

was negative toward all possibility of durable aggregation, motivated by geographic environment, race, local convenience, history: or that which constitutes the nations.⁴²

The two most common manifestations of this ecumenicism were Christianity and democracy; others were the concepts of God, humanity, and the international dictatorship of the proletariat. Lugones explained his distaste for Christianity by noting that it had begun as an internationalist, communist, and antipatriotic creed, and its roots were still apparent. Both Christianity and idealistic democracy aspired toward universal brotherhood, the former through faith and the latter through reason. Life, however, was not susceptible to faith or reason; its evolution was mysterious and instinctive, and no one was capable of discerning its direction or purpose — if, indeed, it had any at all. The war — in which force and nationalism had triumphed over democracy, humanity, and ecumenicism — had shown the failure of rationalists and religious believers to order life according to metaphysical concepts. Men could not rule over life but could only exist within it.⁴³

Despite the recent cataclysm, the ecumenicists persisted in demanding the abolition of war and force. This was not only foolhardy but impossible, since life itself was a state of force. Lugones hoped one day to witness the revival of paganism, in which piety would be subordinate to power. Men would once more accept life the way it was in reality, not the way they conceptualized it. They would end democratic rule, which simply meant giving society's misfits and incompetents the right of subjugating the able ones. One might feel sorry for the former, but life could not be organized on the basis of

charity and compassion, only on the basis of force and hierarchy. Under this scheme beauty expressed this "vital prosperity," while liberty consisted solely of the "conscious capacity to life[,] . . . force and beauty." If, as Lugones put it, the "barbarians" latest struggle failed — in other words, if the emancipatory process was halted — the pagan view would once again prevail.

And over the absurd equality, confused illusion of wretches and barbarians, immortal life will triumph in its glorious Dionysiac iniquity.⁴⁴

Like Maurras, Lugones was fascinated with the aesthetic implications of the mysterious and dynamic world he perceived. Yet his world view represented more than an artist's perspective; it was a violent denunciation of western civilization. God, morality, brotherhood, peace — none of these transcendent values had any place in his system. His conception of life was a narrowly biological one in which power, the struggle for survival, and racial or geographical particularisms comprised the sole realities. At one point Lugones specified that human beings could only be said to form a "zoological species," not any such artificial body as "humanity."⁴⁵ A sympathetic biographer, Julio Irazusta, admitted that Lugones carried his Social Darwinist and Nietzschean principles to incredible extremes.⁴⁶ His fellow LNR collaborator, Ernesto Palacio, described Lugones as fascist.⁴⁷ The influence of Catholic thought on LNR writers led them to repudiate Lugones's paganism and amoralism, although they admired him as a teacher and shared the same enemies.

About the same time Lugones proclaimed the hour of the sword, Juan Carulla was reaching similar conclusions. He believed that the only cure for the ills of democracy was to restore order and hierarchy and solve the conflict between capital and labor along the lines best suited to national tradition, and he helped launch a newspaper to further these aims. La Voz Nacional, the first nationalist organ, appeared between March and November 1925. Only three of his collaborators were Argentine. One of the foreign collaborators, a French marquise, observed that the undertaking was novel indeed: the birth of Argentine nationalism, sponsored by foreigners. A native-born co-founder replied that this was inevitable, since most Argentines were indifferent to nationalism. The short life of the periodical suggested that this was indeed the case, with one important exception — General José F. Uriburu. Like his friend and cousin, Carlos Ibarguren, Uriburu came from an important salteña family, participated in the Revolution of 1890 and in the P.D.P., and was disillusioned with Argentine democracy. He became one of the paper's few subscribers and a friend of Carulla.⁴⁸

Despite the failure of La Voz Nacional, a similar but longer-lived periodical was launched two years later — LNR. Its origins dated back to early 1927, when Julio and Rodolfo Irazusta returned from Europe, where Julio had been studying philosophy and both had become familiar with French and Italian political ideas. Members of an entrerriana landed family, the Irazusta brothers lost much of their

land and fortune during the postwar agrarian crisis. Julio, the younger of the two, was inclined toward scholarly pursuits, and Rodolfo toward practical politics; his duty as a citizen to combat what they viewed as a national crisis would force Julio into the political arena. The younger brother partly attributed Rodolfo's political ability to the influence of their father, a founder of the U.C.R. and a follower of Alem, a liberal who nevertheless opposed the activities of the foreign land companies and admired Rosas for resisting the foreign blockade.⁴⁹ Both liberals and rosistas were found among their ancestors.

The Irazustas' apartment in Buenos Aires became a meeting place for young intellectuals and activists of different ideological backgrounds in 1927. Alfonso de Laferrère and Julio Noé of the P.D.P.; Ernesto Palacio and Juan Carulla, former syndicalists; César Pico, a Catholic traditionalist; Mario Jurado and Carmelo Pellegrini, yrigoyenistas; and the Irazustas, who could best be classified as Antipersonalists, formed the nucleus. Maurras held great appeal for Laferrère, Carulla, and the Irazustas, and Palacio had recently become an orthodox Catholic. Despite their diverse affiliations, all agreed that demagoguery was threatening the national institutions. Most of them despised liberalism and parliamentarism and advocated a strong government which would maintain discipline, hierarchy, religion, and the social order. This government would take the shape of a functional democracy, or a corporatist system, based on the vital forces of society instead of the corrupt political parties.⁵⁰ These beliefs,

along with a vigorous opposition to socialism and immigration and a growing consciousness of imperialism, constituted what they called nationalism.

The self-styled "Organ of Argentine nationalism," LNR was published from December 1927 until December 1928, and then from June 1930 through the end of 1931. It included book reviews and articles of cultural interest and selections from European counterrevolutionary thinkers, but it was mainly devoted to studying and criticizing current political events from a nonpartisan (in the sense of not being tied to any particular party) nationalist viewpoint. The influence of Maurras continued to be strong, but LNR staff members were firmly republican in keeping with Argentine tradition — hence the title. One maurassiano, probably Alfonso de Laferrère, descendant of a French landowning family, refused to join the staff because of his monarchism. He and his brother Roberto, as well as other writers for La Fronda, nevertheless maintained strong ties with LNR. Under the editorship of Francisco Uriuru, a former member of the P.D.P., Comité de la Juventud, and the Liga, La Fronda agreed on many issues with LNR, including the need to end the current electoral system.

Aside from Francisco Uriuru, a number of demócratas progresistas became nationalists. Roberto de Laferrère had supported Lisandro De la Torre because of his opposition to U.C.R. demagoguery and the régimen, both of which Laferrère repudiated. With his stand in favor of divorce and his anticlericalism, however, De la Torre lost many

supporters to nationalism. Many nationalists traced their origins — familial, historical, or philosophical — further back to Alem and early Radicalism, which they characterized as criollo, intransigent, and austere, in contrast to Yrigoyenism, which had become a "vehicle for the New Argentines."⁵¹

In LNR's first issue, December 1, 1927, a writer (probably Rodolfo Irazusta) defined the Argentine dilemma. Forty years of "spiritual disorientation" (since Juárez Celman) had produced ideological confusion within the ruling classes, particularly among the educated. To achieve progress Argentines needed to follow an idealistic, united elite, but instead they were ruled by the game of politics. Liberalism had served adequately during the period of national organization, but its time had passed. The electoral reform had encouraged the rise of political parties which pandered to the masses and exploited the country. The object of life was not to produce but to be hired by the government; Argentina had become a country of functionaries.

The author protested other shortcomings: government corruption and mishandling of finances, anticlericalism, excessive presidential interference in politics, lack of genuine political representation, violations of the Constitution and of Argentine republican traditions. "Exaggeratedly egalitarian" inheritance laws and the threat of divorce legislation imperiled family solidarity. Poorly adapted to national conditions, the economic system was in extreme disarray, and the mother

industries suffered under the enormous burden of foreign capital. The old financial structure did not adequately protect agrarian production, and the exodus of rural population to the cities and the lack of incentive further weakened this mainstay of the economy. The author warned that Argentina's wealth and prosperity were shallow and exhaustible.

As the root cause of this crisis was lack of direction, the solution was to overturn the ruling liberal democratic ideologues and substitute an elite unconnected to the political parties and guided by principles opposed to those of the French Revolution. As Palacio wrote in the same issue, "Let's organize the counterrevolution." "Counterrevolutionary" described the beliefs of LNR writers better than "nationalist." Palacio distinguished LNR's brand of nationalism from that of students who adhered to the principles of the University Reform movement, the Mexican Revolution, and bolshevism. True nationalists desired nothing more than what was best for the nation and the people who comprised it. They believed that individual interests must be subordinated to the interests of the community and individual rights to the rights of the state. Following in the footsteps of Rousseau, democratic ideologues forgot about the common welfare and substituted in its place abstract principles — popular sovereignty, liberty, equality, victory of the proletariat — as the proper goals of government. The divergence between nationalism and democracy was vast. Nationalists hoped to assure the unity, peace, and greatness of

the country, but they recognized that this task would be impossible without order, whose elements were authority and hierarchy. With their concern for individual rights (and not duties) and abstract principles, democrats opposed authority and hierarchy and consequently were the enemies of order and national welfare. Democrats would constitute dissolvent agents in any state because organized society would never fit the ideal model that they carried in their imaginations. Nationalists would always accept society as given and try to work within it. Thus the two could never be compatible.⁵²

In the nationalists' view, the reign of democracy had weakened the Argentine nation and therefore had to be ended, by force if necessary.⁵³ Even before Yrigoyen's re-election, Rodolfo Irazusta and Juan Carulla had become convinced of the need for a military revolution to overturn the existing political system. At the end of 1927 the two men approached General Uriburu and suggested that he lead an uprising. Uriburu refused and continued to do so until 1930, but he did read Mussolini's works and LNR and maintained contact with LNR writers and Lugones. On the first anniversary of LNR, December 1928, a banquet was held with Uriburu as the guest of honor. The nationalists eventually convinced Uriburu that a revolution was necessary and that he should lead it; once the revolution took place, however, the traditional liberal-conservative groups exerted the greatest influence over him.⁵⁴

About a year after Yrigoyen returned to office, the Great Depression began. Soon thereafter its effects were felt in Argentina:

a drop in exports, the flight of capital, the movement of unemployed workers from the countryside to the cities, a growing labor surplus in the cities accompanied by declining wages.⁵⁵ The political situation as well as the economic was unsettling. Facing the specter of economic catastrophe, the executive seemed to be mired in administrative duties and the Congress in partisan political battles. It was widely believed that the President, well into his seventies, was senile. Whether this was true or not, Yrigoyen was notoriously poor at delegating authority and at taking quick action, hardly the decisive leader needed in a crisis. Moreover, many of his associates were corrupt and inefficient. Meanwhile, Congressmen were engaging in bitter interparty warfare over provincial election outcomes, seemingly indulging in mere politiquería at the expense of vital concerns. It was not surprising that the right-wing critique of liberal democracy found an audience, particularly among disaffected sectors of the former political elite and the military. The growth of nationalism in the armed forces has been well documented elsewhere;⁵⁶ suffice it to say here that Yrigoyen's interference in its affairs, as well as a sense of impending political and economic chaos, convinced many officers of the need for a coup, and some officers of the need for revamping the system of government itself.

Public opinion, the press, and the universities turned against the Radical administration, and protest meetings began to fill plazas in the federal capital. In response, young yrigoyenistas — whom their

opponents called the "Klan Radical" — took their cause into the streets, and nationalist enthusiasts resolved to do the same. As an Independence Day protest, on July 9, 1929 the Irazustas, LNR writer Mario Lassaga, and Roberto de Laferrère stood in the Plaza de Mayo and cried "Down with bad government!" More embarrassed and surprised than angered, the police arrested Rodolfo Irazusta and Lassaga but released them early the next day.⁵⁷ Not long thereafter, Laferrère called a meeting of students and journalists from LNR and La Fronda in the latter's offices. Some were attracted by Italian fascism, others by Primo de Rivera, but all were opposed to Yrigoyen. They decided to form a voluntary youth militia — the Liga Republicana — to combat political corruption and those whom they regarded as the internal enemies of the nation. One member, Carlos Ibarguren (Jr.), dated the militia's origins back to early 1929, to a conversation between the elder Irazusta, Laferrère, and Uriburu, in which the first two told the General about their plans for a revolutionary movement. Uriburu reminded them that he was on active duty and said that he would not participate at this stage; that task corresponded to the youth, as it had corresponded to him and like-minded young men in 1890. As for later on, he would wait and see.⁵⁸

The Liga Republicana quickly took to the streets, engaging in antigovernment demonstrations and in battles with the police, the Klan Radical, and leftist university students. Its purpose was to stimulate and unite popular opposition to the Yrigoyen administration,

and in pursuit of this goal the republicanos appeared at virtually every opposition rally, organized public meetings, disseminated posters, and sent delegations to the provinces to rouse support. According to one participant, by the end of 1929 the militia had attracted about 2800 adherents. Although the Liga Republicana's public functions drew crowds of this size, the organization's hard core numbered only several hundred.⁵⁹

The republicanos claimed that their actions were governed by a nationalist orientation which placed Argentine interests above those of party, ideology, class, or group. Roberto de Laferrère, the main organizer of the militia, went further and declared his opposition to those who "put humanity before the fatherland." In the group's declaration of aims,⁶⁰ Laferrère wrote that the Liga resisted not only the government in power but the actual system of government. It would struggle against demagoguery, whose manifestations and consequences were the lack of a governmental program, subordination of government officials to party leaders, executive complicity in labor conflicts, mass "adulation," and the government's assumption that it had a popular mandate to do as it wished. It would combat specific administrative abuses and would defend the Constitution and laws against Yrigoyen's usurpations of provincial autonomy, Congressional power, rights of public assembly, and public funds.

The Liga Republicana coordinated its actions with other opposition groups — conservative parties, the P.D.P., the Independent Socialists,

and other militias. At times the republicanos' ideals and methods antagonized their allies, particularly after the Videla Dorna incident. A leading republicano and a Conservative, Daniel Videla Dorna had been elected deputy from Buenos Aires province in March 1930, but the Personalist Radicals in the Chamber refused to admit him and other newly elected deputies of the opposition. His fellow militiamen declared a "gaucho war" against Yrigoyen and engaged in more street battles than ever. On the eve of the revolution, a P.D.P. speaker criticized militia violence. In response, LNR noted that the "moribund"⁶¹ P.D.P. was trying to revive the corpse of democracy, while, the young republicanos supported a vigorous government of order. Once led by brilliant leaders, the P.D.P. had decayed and turned leftist.

Although the ideals which inspired the Liga Republicana and LNR were virtually the same, differences arose between the two. Despite the militia's stance on political parties, Carulla and Laferrère wanted it to support the Independent Socialists in the 1930 congressional elections, while Rodolfo Irazusta wanted it and other groups to form a coalition that would offer its own list of candidates, headed by Manuel Carlés of the Liga Patriótica Argentina. The first plan prevailed and Irazusta resigned from the Liga Republicana; this was not the first time he despaired over what he regarded as the republicanos' incapabilities.⁶² The split notwithstanding, LNR writers reported approvingly on the militia's activities.

The closest allies of the Liga Republicana were the Legión de Mayo, formed in August 1930, and the Liga Patriótica Argentina. Carlés

was perhaps the first person of importance to call for Yrigoyen's overthrow, in a speech delivered in July 1929. He complained that the government had failed to act on pressing national issues or to observe the Constitution. The moment was approaching, he warned, when Argentines would have to rebel to protect their country's institutions.⁶³ The Liga had another reason to support a revolution. In doing so, it was merely continuing its policy of defending Argentina against "dissolvent parties." According to Carlés, the Liga had discovered the existence of a pact between the Personalists and anarchism, in which the latter would give the former votes in exchange for "demagogic" measures.⁶⁴ (Carlés did not seem to know that anarchists did not participate in elections.) The Liga also complained to the press that Yrigoyen was not combatting bolshevism with enough vigor.

Although there was little indication of renewed labor militancy, liguistas and many other Argentines assumed that given the precarious economic and political situation, leftists would find fertile ground for activity. In December 1929, Uriburu claimed to have heard of a communist-inspired plot of firemen and policemen. After the September 6 coup, the General insisted that if events had continued in the same path, there would have been a social revolution. "Anarchism was the specter which appeared to us at the end of the road."⁶⁵ To LNR writers and republicanos, a leftist upheaval seemed the logical consequence of what they considered Yrigoyenist demagoguery and democratic excesses.

At any rate, brigades in the capital met to express their solidarity with Carlés and discuss means of defending their neighborhoods against communists and anarchists.⁶⁶

An official campaign against Carlés began in October 1929, when police tore down Liga posters which proclaimed that the "hour of vindication" had arrived, that Argentines had to choose between a government which disobeyed the law and the Fatherland. In public meetings often disrupted by police, Carlés and other liguistas continued to speak against the administration and in favor of anti-Yrigoyenist youths killed or wounded by government forces.⁶⁷ The Liga seemed to be approaching the viewpoint of the new forces of order. Carlés welcomed LNR's return to print in June 1930, and after the revolution the Junta Central declared its support for a republic, as against a government of the "horde." In its view, governments in the future would have to be for the people, but not of the people.⁶⁸ Carlés did not agree on all matters with the nationalists, however, as will be seen.

Overlapping the Liga Republicana in ideology and personnel, the Legión de Mayo was founded in late August 1930. Aside from Carulla, Laferrère, Videla Dorna, and other republicanos, the Legión's nucleus consisted of members of old interrelated families from the littoral region whose ancestors had fought against Rosas. Influenced, perhaps, by this heritage, the group's initial statement of aims praised Argentine democracy and the figure of Rivadavia. At great cost, a

representative federal republic had been erected between May 1810 and 1912, but events since the passage of the Saénz Peña law had placed this system in jeopardy. Named in honor of the revolution of 1810, the Legión de Mayo invited Argentine youths to defend the national patrimony and arrest the slide into anarchy.⁶⁹ La Nueva República announced approvingly the formation of the Legión, but reproved its leaders for thinking that the heroes of May were democrats.⁷⁰ (La Nueva República constantly reminded its readers that a democracy and a republic were not the same and that the Constitution said nothing about the former.) From its manifesto, however, it was clear that the Legión's version of democracy bore little resemblance to that of Rousseau or Yrigoyen.

The Liga Republicana, Legión de Mayo, and Liga Patriótica Argentina were the civilian nonpartisan groups which stirred up public sentiment against Yrigoyen, and the first two played a role in the September 6 coup, albeit a limited one. Under the command of Alberto Viñas, a Conservative deputy, the combined forces of the Liga Republicana and the Legión de Mayo numbered over a thousand. On the eve of the revolution, armed republicanos were assigned to guard Uriburu as he moved from one house to another, hunted by the police. The morning of September 6, small groups of republicanos and legionarios headed toward the plaza of Flores, a middle-class neighborhood, where they expected to join the soldiers in revolt. Instead they encountered the police, who dispersed and jailed some of the civilian

revolutionaries. Others managed to escape, to find the troops on their way from the barracks of the Campo de Mayo, and to accompany them to the center of Buenos Aires.⁷¹

The Revolution of 1930 enjoyed widespread popular support.⁷² The nationalists — and Uriburu — interpreted this to mean that the people agreed with them on the need for a government above politics and classes which would restore discipline, hierarchy, and unity. They proved to be wrong, for most Argentines wanted a solution to critical economic problems and a speedy return to constitutional rule, not Uriburu's cherished "functional democracy." At any rate, initially nationalists had reason to be satisfied with the provisional government, a satisfaction reflected in the issues of LNR and Criterio which immediately followed the revolution.

Nationalists such as Carulla, Lugones, Juan P. Ramos and José María Rosa, Sr. (the last two were active in later groups), and sympathizers such as Carlos Ibarguren, Sr. were Uriburu's close advisers. To staff the cabinet and intervene in the provinces, Uriburu appointed men of whom the nationalists generally approved: persons mostly tied to the régimen but also to the land, the Church, and the Argentine past. Furthermore, a few of them, such as the Conservatives Matías Sánchez Sorondo, Minister of the Interior, and Carlos Meyer Pellegrini, Interventor of Buenos Aires province, publicly criticized the old political system. Ibarguren, as Interventor of Córdoba province, tried to lay the ground work for a functional democracy and to

carry the mission of the provisional government to the interior.⁷³ Uriburu also appointed many nationalists and Catholic spokesmen to positions in the federal government and interventions, or he facilitated their access to lower-level posts. At least twenty-six LNR staff members, republicanos, and legionarios were given sinecures. Alejandro Bunge took part in the intervention of Santa Fe province and Dell'Oro Maini in the one on Corrientes.

The Legión de Mayo was formally dissolved at a banquet celebrated in the Sociedad Rural's headquarters on September 27; one of the speakers was Mariano Villar Sáenz Peña, past president of the Comité de la Juventud and a legionario. In mid-February of the following year, however, its former leaders asked their old comrades to regroup in order to assure the success of the revolution and prevent Radical subversion. Still headed by a civilian, Rafael A. Campos, descendant of an antirosistista general, the Legión now also recruited from the armed forces. Its "technical director" was Lieutenant Colonel Emilio Kinkelin, Uriburu's secretary. The reconstituted organization began to establish brigades, principally in the federal capital and Buenos Aires province. The members of these new brigades often carried Italian names and came from industrial neighborhoods, indicating the increasing popularity of nationalism.⁷⁴ In another attempt to win support for Uriburu, Carulla and other nationalists formed the Partido Nacional in 1931, but shortly thereafter it merged with the Conservative party.⁷⁵

After the coup the Liga Republicana found a reason for continuing its existence; it would study the problems Argentina now faced after the "necessary" revolution. Grateful for their services, Uriburu gave the republicanos a banquet in the Jockey Club on October 31. Like the Legión de Mayo, the Liga Republicana also went on to form brigades, each under the leadership of a military officer.⁷⁶ The brigades of both of these groups, however, were coordinated by a new semiofficial body -- the Legión Cívica Argentina (henceforth, LCA).

Early in 1931 this new group was formed under the leadership of Dr. Floro Lavalle, a prominent physician, landowner, and founding member of the Liga Patriótica Argentina. Lavalle and 300 fellow members met with Uriburu in mid-February, and three months later the government extended official recognition to the LCA as its partner in the task of "institutional reconstruction." Each member was given an official medallion, which gave the holder special privileges in his defense of public order. The aims of the LCA, as stated in its declaration of principles, were to help the authorities maintain order, promote argentinidad and the social and moral unity of the people, and provide citizens with military training. The LCA supported the government's program of constitutional reform and functional democracy. It believed that only native-born Argentines should occupy official positions and that immigration should be strictly regulated. Concern for the masses was not absent from its considerations; it believed in establishing a court to settle labor-management disputes, helping all workers to

acquire property, and improving the laborers' health and technical ability. As La Vanguardia noted, there were many similarities between the LCA and the Liga of 1919,⁷⁷ the main difference being that the former explicitly viewed both leftism and liberalism as threats.

Like its predecessor, the LCA was a paramilitary organization. On military bases officers trained its members to use arms and to march, and frequently they commanded brigades. Ideological training was limited to the repetition of slogans emphasizing the defense of order, God, family, and country. The LCA's first public appearance was in late April 1931 — a parade in military formation through the wealthy neighborhood of Palermo in Uriburu's honor. A squadron of twenty-four planes, piloted by civilian members, escorted the parade. La Fronda estimated the number of nonuniformed marchers at 15,000, La Vanguardia at half that figure. Uriburu congratulated the militia for having established a link between the people and the military.⁷⁸ According to La Fronda, a sympathetic source, the LCA marshalled about 27,000 and 35,000 members for its parades of May 25 and July 6, respectively; La Vanguardia counted fewer marchers.⁷⁹ After these occasions, members wore gray uniforms and carried rifles in public.

At the May 25th parade, Uriburu again praised the LCA for its "civic force which condenses and expresses with fervor the genuine spirit of the Revolution of September." He defined the organization as an enthusiastic arm of the people, representing order, discipline, and self-abnegation and defending the fatherland threatened by anarchy

and demagoguery. In another speech he added that the LCA, an apolitical force instructed and disciplined by officers, constituted a reserve army. The reason for its semiofficial status was that the state could not afford a large military draft.⁸⁰

Many observers questioned whether the LCA was indeed disinterested and apolitical and whether a large paramilitary force was needed to defend the state, despite several Radical uprisings.⁸¹ They were alarmed by the size of the organization; its male and female members were estimated at anywhere from 30,000 to 50,000 and its brigades were located throughout Argentina. The members' main "defense activities" were to hold parades, spy on civilians, repress the political activities of students, workers, and Radicals, and instruct school children to march in military formation. The editors of La Vanguardia pointed out that the LCA was an instrument of hatred against the U.C.R. and thus was dividing the nation, in contradiction with its aims. Its recruitment of women and children and its activities in the schools disturbed La Prensa. According to a police precinct captain, the LCA included common criminals who abused their privileges: for example, by ordering the police to free their friends from jail. Reports abounded of LCA activities in government offices, forcing public employees to join the militia or at least attend the parades, although LCA commanders denied these allegations. Furthermore, high-level bureaucrats used their positions to publicize the LCA. Finally, despite the militia's supposed nonpartisanship, ties existed between

it and the Conservatives, at least within the province of Buenos Aires.⁸²

Many persons feared that Uriburu planned to use the LCA to perpetuate his rule, despite the General's denials. Perhaps more significantly, some military officers thought the militia was usurping the authority of the armed forces. These officers saw their role in the revolution as one of returning Argentina to constitutional rule, and they disapproved of Uriburu's corporatist designs.⁸³ Uriburu had made no secret of his distaste for political parties and his desire to eliminate them. A majority of military officers, led by General Agustín P. Justo, successfully opposed this plan.

Meanwhile, because of poor health, disillusionment, and an apparent susceptibility to the influence of friends, Uriburu increasingly allowed Sanchez Sorondo to run the government and try to bring the Conservatives to power. Over nationalist protest, elections in Buenos Aires province were held in April 1931, which the Radicals won unexpectedly. Clearly the government had counted upon a Conservative victory; shocked, it voided the returns. After a pro-Radical military uprising in July, severe measures were imposed against the U.C.R. Leading Radicals were persecuted and deported, and the party was proscribed from the upcoming presidential election in November, a state of siege already being in existence since the coup. To no one's surprise, the ticket of General Justo and Julio Roca (Jr.), supported by the Concordancia, an alliance of the Conservatives of

Buenos Aires, provincial conservative factions, Independent Socialists, and Antipersonalists, won an obviously fraudulent election.

Long before late 1931 many nationalists had become dissatisfied with the LCA and with the Uriburu administration in general.

Roberto de Laferrère opposed the incorporation of the Liga Republicana into the LCA, which he saw as opportunistic, oversized, and undisciplined, in contrast to the former's selectivity and disinterested spirit.⁸⁴ Laferrère's opinions manifested the resistance of elitist nationalists to broadening their movement. Other nationalists who had joined the LCA soon thereafter left it, repelled by its ties to the Conservative party.⁸⁵

As early as the beginning of October 1930, Rodolfo Irazusta noted the regime's faults. In a letter to his brother, he criticized its ties to the régimen and the Jockey Club. A few weeks later in LNR he decried the lack of genuine change and concluded that "things are not going very well."⁸⁶ Observing events from Europe, Julio Irazusta wrote that if the political system were not revised, the revolution would have been futile, but he declared that he had not yet abandoned hope.⁸⁷ With the reversion to electoralism, however, the Irazustas did lose hope. Disillusioned by the return of the régimen and increasingly preoccupied with the issue of economic imperialism (a concern which had never been absent from their thought), the brothers and some of their collaborators eventually came to recognize Yrigoyen's nationalist accomplishments. Julio Irazusta joined the Radical party

as a way of demonstrating his opposition to the political status quo. Since in his opinion the U.C.R. had no doctrine, membership in that party signified nothing other than a commitment to honest government and representation, a stand which involved no ideological compromises on his part.⁸⁸ Other nationalists remained loyal to Uriburu, even after his death in 1932, and continued to seek corporatist or Catholic solutions to Argentine problems.

The path of the Liga Patriótica Argentina diverged from that of its former allies. Bitterly opposed to the persecution of Radicals and their exclusion from politics, Carlés publicly demanded that Uriburu change his policies. When the latter responded by forbidding Carlés to speak in churches, which he had been doing since 1919, Carlés resigned his position as professor of "Civic Morality" in the Colegio Nacional. He declared that he would not teach constitutional law under a government which disregarded it. Even longtime leftist opponents of the Liga applauded his actions,⁸⁹ which demonstrated the gulf between his liberal-conservatism and the opinions of the nationalists; these differences will be examined in the next chapter. In the waning months of the Uriburu government, the civilian forces which had supported the September 6 coup splintered, and they have never been able to reunite since then.

Notes

1

This phrase was found in an article written by Ernesto Palacio in La Nueva República (henceforth LNR), I (Dec. 1, 1927). I am very grateful to Julio Irazusta for allowing me to read this collection of this periodical and his private papers.

2

Congreso Nacionalista de Economía Rural (1935), p. 41.

3

Marysa Navarro Gerassi gave Lugones this name in Los nacionалистas, p. 43. Onega, La inmigración, pp. 216-219, and Irazusta, Lugones, pp. 14 and 98-100, contain discussions of these lectures.

4

Irazusta, Lugones, p. 101. Lugones began his career in public service at the age of nineteen, almost certainly with the help of family connections.

5

On the economy in the 1920's see Di Tella and Zymelman, Los ciclos, pp. 186-242, and Vásquez-Presedo, Estadísticas, II, pp. 189, 194-195, 203, 210-213.

6

Vásquez-Presedo, Estadísticas, II, p. 189.

7

Vernon L. Phelps, The International Economic Position of Argentina (Philadelphia, 1938), p. 108.

8

Di Tella and Zymelman, Los ciclos, p. 227.

9

Vásquez-Presedo, Estadísticas, II, pp. 30 and 46.

10

Ibid, p. 47.

11

On labor, socialism, and the U.C.R. in the 1920's see Rock, Politics in Argentina, pp. 214-220; Carlos R. Melo, Los partidos

políticos argentinos (Córdoba, 1970); p. 48, and Baily, Labor, Nationalism and Politics, pp. 45-50.

12

See Carl Solberg, "The Tariff and Politics in Argentina, 1916-1930," Hispanic American Historical Review, LIII (May 1973), pp. 252-274. Another tariff had been passed in 1917, but it was not as significant as the one in 1923.

13

Richard J. Walter discusses the Reform movement in Student Politics in Argentina. The University Reform and Its Effects, 1918-1964 (New York, 1968), pp. 39-62.

14

Rock, Politics in Argentina, pp. 223-224.

15

David Rock, "The Rise of the Argentine Radical Party (the Unión Cívica Radical), 1891-1916," University of Cambridge, Center of Latin American Studies, Working Papers No. 7 (Cambridge, n.d.,), pp. 39-40.

16

Smith, Argentina and the Failure of Democracy, pp. 30-31. Also see Cantón, Moreno, and Ciria, La democracia constitucional, pp. 55-56.

17

Vásquez-Presedo, Estadísticas, II, p. 286.

18

Rock, Politics in Argentina, p. 236. This point is also discussed at length in Carl Solberg, Oil and Nationalism in Argentina: A History (Stanford, 1979).

19

Smith, Argentina and the Failure of Democracy, pp. 92-96.

20

This is the conclusion reached by David Rock in "Radical Populism and the Conservative Elite, 1912-1930," in Argentina in the Twentieth Century, ed. by David Rock (Pittsburgh, 1975), pp. 66-87.

21

Furlong, "El catolicismo," pp. 282-283. Dell'Oro became Minister of Education in 1955-1956.

22

Walter, Student Politics, pp. 34-35.

23

Pensamiento democrático, pp. 128-129; Zuleta Alvarez, El nacionalismo argentino, I, p. 188.

24

The following account of the Cursos and Convivio draws upon these sources: Alberto Espeluz Berro, "Un fragmento," and Bernadino Montejano (h.), "Un hogar intelectual," Universitas, IX (July-Sept. 1975), pp. 46-48 and pp. 51-54, respectively; and Comisión de Estudios de la Sociedad Argentina de Defensa de la Tradición, Familia y Propiedad, El nacionalismo: una incógnita en constante evolución (Buenos Aires, 1970), pp. 38-40.

25

Joseph N. Moody, "Catholicism and Society in France: from Old Regime to Democratic Society," in Church and Society: Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements, 1789-1950, ed. by Joseph N. Moody (New York, 1953), pp. 164-169.

26

Many books are available on Maurras; I have chosen to rely on the collection of his writings found in J. S. McClelland, ed., The French Right (from De Maistre to Maurras) (London, 1970), pp. 213-304. For a concise statement by a nationalist see Enrique Zuleta Alvarez, Introducción a Maurras (Buenos Aires, 1965). Maurras was not the only influence on the nationalists, of course; Julio Irazusta was also attracted by the thoughts of Croce and Santayana. See Irazusta's Memorias (historia de un historiador a la fuerza) (Buenos Aires, 1975), pp. 153-154.

27

Julio Irazusta to Enrique Pérez Mariluz. Letter, Dec. 3, 1925, Irazusta, Papers, Notebook I.

28

Charles Maurras, Trois idées politiques, in Oeuvres Capitales, II (Paris, 1954), p. 88, cited by Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism, p. 185. The following paragraph is also inspired by Nolte's discussion on pp. 185-189. The phrase "emancipatory process" is my own.

29

Irazusta to Pérez Mariluz, Letter.

30

Espezel Berro, "Un fragmento," p. 47.

31

For example, see Guillermo Sáenz, "El Vaticano, el fascismo y 'L'Action Française,'" Criterio, 57 (Apr. 4, 1929), pp. 436-438.

32

Criterio, 67 (June 13, 1929), p. 213.

33

On the end of Criterio's "golden years" and the rise of Número, see Manuel Gálvez, Entre la novela y la historia (Rev. ed.; Buenos Aires, 1962), pp. 15-17 and 158.

34

2 (Feb. 1930), p. 11.

35

1 (Jan. 1930), pp. 5-6.

36

On Baluarte and its source of inspiration see Mario Amadeo, "El grupo 'Baluarte' y los Cursos de Cultura Católica," Universitas, IX (July-Sept. 1975), pp. 23-25. Also see LNR, 69 (Nov. 8, 1930).

37

LNR, 7 (Mar. 1, 1928).

38

Julio Irazusta, Private interview, Las Casuarinas, Entre Ríos, Argentina, July 22, 1977.

39

Federico Ibarguren, Orígenes del nacionalismo argentino (Buenos Aires, 1969), p. 14.

40

Zuleta Alvarez, El nacionalismo argentino, I, p. 126.

41

La organización de la paz (Buenos Aires, 1925), p. 60.

42

Ibid, p. 11.

43

Ibid, pp. 61-64.

44

Article in Revista de la Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales (July-Sept. 1927), cited by Irazusta, Lugones, pp. 112-113.

45

La organización de la paz, p. 10.

46

Irazusta, Lugones, p. 111.

47

LNR, 24 (July 21, 1928).

48

Carulla, Al filo, pp. 228-231. The anecdote on the marquise should probably be taken with a grain of salt, but it is at least illustrative.

49

Irazusta, Memorias, pp. 176-178; Carulla, Al filo, pp. 241-243; Julio Irazusta, "Historia de La Nueva República," n.d., Irazusta, Papers, Notebook II.

50

Irazusta, Memorias, p. 181. Jurado and Pellegrini left LNR because of its position on Yrigoyen.

51

This phrase comes from Roberto de Laferrère, cited in Carlos Ibarguren (h.), Roberto de Laferrère (periodismo-política-historia) (Buenos Aires, 1970), p. 21. Also see p. 24; and Ernesto Palacio, Historia de la Argentina, 1515-1957, II (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1957), p. 365. Other former demócratas progresistas were Carlos Ibarguren, José Félix Uriburu, and José María Rosa.

52

LNR, 13 (May 5, 1928), and 43 (Dec. 1, 1928).

53

On the Revolution of 1930, only events which directly affected the nationalists will be discussed here. I have relied on the following sources: Revista de Historia, La crisis de 1930, 3 (1958); Marvin Goldwert, Democracy, Militarism and Nationalism in Argentina, 1930-1966. An Interpretation (Austin, 1972); Robert A. Potash, The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-1945: Yrigoyen to Perón (Stanford, 1969); La revolución del 6 de septiembre de 1930: su motivo, sus hombres, su gobierno (Buenos Aires, 1931).

54

Carulla, Al filo, pp. 247-250; Contrán de Guemes, "El año 27 Uriburu se negó a intervenir en una revolución," Hechos en el mundo, Feb. 4, 1957; Julio Irazusta, Interview, Oral History Project, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 28, 1971; LNR, 44 (Dec. 8, 1928).

55

Roberto Etchepareborda, "Aspectos políticos de la crisis de 1930," Revista de Historia, La crisis de 1930, 3 (1958), p. 30.

56

See especially Potash, Army and Politics; and Goldwert, Democracy, Militarism and Nationalism.

57

La Fronda, July 11, 1929; Irazusta, Memorias, p. 189.

58

Carulla, Al filo, pp. 252-253; Carlos Ibarguren (h.d.), Respuestas a un cuestionario acerca del nacionalismo, 1930-1945 (Buenos Aires, 1971), p. 9.

59

I followed the organization's activities in La Fronda, which also reported on numbers of members. In addition see C. Ibarguren, Laferrière, p. 43.

60

For Laferrère's remark on humanity, see C. Ibarguren, Laferrère, p. 19; the declaration of aims is quoted in Julio A. Quesada, Orígenes de la revolución del 6 de septiembre de 1930 (Rosas e Yrigoyen) (Buenos Aires, 1930), pp. 74-78. I cannot find the date of the declaration.

61

F. Ibarguren, Orígenes, pp. 37-39; LNR, 60 (Aug. 30, 1930).

62

Rodolfo Irazusta to Julio Irazusta, Letter, Sept. 3, 1929, Irazusta, Papers, Notebook II. Also see Irazusta, Memorias, pp. 190-191; La Fronda, Apr. 5, 1930.

63

V. Gutiérrez de Miguel, La revolución argentina. Relato de un testigo presencial (Madrid, 1930), pp. 91-92; Biblioteca de la Liga Patriótica Argentina, La Liga Patriótica y la revolución del 6 de septiembre de 1930 (Buenos Aires, 1930), pp. 7-8.

64

Liga, Liga y la revolución, p. 16.

65

Cited in J. Beresford Crawkes, 533 días de historia argentina; 6 de septiembre de 1930 — 20 de febrero de 1932 (Buenos Aires, 1932), p. 106. On the plot also see C. Ibarguren, Laferrère, p. 48.

66

Brigade 19, Minutes, Oct. 10, 1929, August 18 and 25, 1930.

67

Quesada, Orígenes de la revolución, pp. 28-29, 57-59; Cutiérrrez, Relato, pp. 94, 129.

68

LNR, 50 (June 21, 1930), 63 (Sept. 27, 1930), and 66 (Oct. 18, 1930).

69

Quesada, Orígenes de la revolución, p. 80, José M. Sarobe, Memorias sobre la revolución del 6 de septiembre de 1930 (Buenos Aires, 1957), p. 59.

70

LNR, 60 (Aug. 30, 1930).

71

C. Ibarguren, Respuestas, pp. 10-12; F. Ibarguren, Orígenes, pp. 47-49; Carulla, Al filo, pp. 273-274. On the events of Sept. 6, see especially La revolución.

72

Some would deny this statement. In support of my position see Alberto Gerchunoff, "Bajorrelieve de algunos hechos," Caras y Caretas, Sept. 13, 1930.

73

See Meyer Pelegrini's statements in Caras y Caretas, Sept. 27, 1930. Also see Ibarguren, La historia, pp. 383-384.

74

Caras y Caretas, Oct. 4, 1930; La Fronda, Sept. 28, 1930; La Vanguardia, Feb. 16, 1931.

75

Carulla, Al filo, pp. 213-214.

76

Caras y Caretas, Nov. 8, 1930; La Fronda, Oct. 22 and Oct. 31, 1930, and Oct. 19, 1931.

77

La Vanguardia, June 19, 1931. Also see its issues of Feb. 16 and May 19, 1931; La Fronda, Mar. 26 and May 17, 1931; and "Declaración de principios de la Legión" n.p., n.d. (Photocopy.) I am grateful to Carlos Mayo for the latter.

78

La Vanguardia, Apr. 24 and 27, 1931; La Fronda, Apr. 27-28, 1931.

79

La Vanguardia, May 26, 1931; La Fronda, May 27 and July 11, 1931.

80

José F. Uriburu, La palabra del general Uriburu: discursos, manifiestos, declaraciones y cartas publicadas durante su gobierno (Buenos Aires, 1933), pp. 93-94, for the May 25 speech. See La Fronda, July 7, 1931, for the other talk.

81

On the Radical uprisings see Potash, Army and Politics, pp. 58, 69-71.

82

Criticisms of the LCA are found in La Vanguardia, Apr. 27, May 20, June 19 and 24, and July 15, 1931; La Prensa, June 17, 1931; Walter, Student Politics, p. 104; Romariz, La semana trágica, p. 172; Luis L. Boffi, Juventud, universidad y patria. Bajo la tiranía del sable (Buenos Aires, 1933), p. 250. For a defense of the LCA see Criterio, 169 (May 28, 1931), p. 289. An official discusses his pro-LCA activities in Minister of Government, Justice, and Public Instruction of Tucumán, Dr. Delfín Medina, to Provisional President, José Félix Uriburu, Letter, June 8, 1931, José Félix Uriburu, Private letters, Notebook IV, A.G.N., Buenos Aires, Argentina.

83

La Vanguardia, June 15, 1932; Sarobe, Memorias, p. 208. See Juan Perón, Tres revoluciones militares (Buenos Aires, 1963) on the dissension within the military. Also see José F. Uriburu to Dr. Eduardo Laurencena, Letter, July 5, 1931, in Uriburu, La palabra, pp. 109-110.

84

C. Ibarguren, Laferrère, pp. 54-55.

85

On LNR opposition to the LCA, see LNR, 100 (Oct. 20, 1931).

86

"Carta a Julio Irazusta de Rodolfo Irazusta (1-10-30)," in El pensamiento político nacionalista, II: La revolución de 1930, ed. by Julio Irazusta (Buenos Aires, 1975), p. 111; LNR, 67 (Oct. 25, 1930).

87

LNR, 71 (Nov. 22, 1930).

88

Irazusta, Interview, Oral History Project.

89

Boffi, Juventud, pp. 251-257.

CHAPTER VI
COUNTERREVOLUTION, 1919-1932: COMPOSITION
AND SOCIAL THOUGHT OF THE NATIONALISTS

Unlike the liguistas of 1919, the nationalists of the early 1930's opposed the "establishment" and the existing political system. While the Liga's greatest enemy was organized labor, the nationalists reserved most of their darts for liberal democracy and those groups who had advanced themselves under it. In this chapter I will illustrate the emerging nature of counterrevolution in Argentina by examining the nationalists' personal backgrounds and their opinions on social questions and contrasting them with those of Liga members.

I identified 374 nationalists and categorized them as follows:

(1) 18 who write for LNR or joined the group known as Acción Republicana (see below); (2) 135 members of the Liga Republicana; (3) 155 members of the Legión de Mayo; (4) 28 who belonged to both the Legión and the Liga Republicana; (5) 34 members of the Legión Cívica Argentina; and (6) 4 members of a combination of nationalist groups. Information was found on 61 percent of the first category, 83 percent of the second, 75 percent of the third, 96 percent of the fourth, 85 percent of the fifth, and all of the sixth, or 80 percent of the entire group studied. In contrast, data were available on 92 percent of Liga leaders and 36 percent of Liga delegates from the brigades.

Some differences in social status were found between nationalists (see Table XIII). For example, LNR writers and members of Acción

Table XIII
Social Status of Nationalists

	A. Membership in Tercero Militar No. Z.	B. Membership in Centro Naval, Tercero Club No. Z.	C. Membership in Sociedad Rural Argentina or other Rural Society No. Z.	D. Listed in Social Register No. Z.	E. in D, but not in A.P.C.D. Set in A.P.C.D. No. Z.	F. Total Persons in One or More of A.P.C.D. (Aristocrats) No. Z.
LRB, Acción Revolucionaria (18)	3	17	2	11	—	—
Lira República (135)	25	19	2	1	21	16
Legión de Mayo (155)	56	36	3	2	32	21
Liga Republicana y Tercer de Mayo (28)	8	29	—	6	21	26
TCA (34)	12	35	4	12	8	24
Combination (6)	2	50	—	—	2	50
Total (37)	196	28	11	3	67	18
					199	88
					53	24
					227	61

Republicana ranked lowest by every criterion except membership in prestigious military clubs; they were intellectuals involved principally in scholarly and journalistic pursuits (see Table XIV). Members of the LCA and the Legión de Mayo, on the other hand, ranked the highest by most criteria. In the case of the former, one should remember that only leaders were studied and that its militia included a large popular component, the largest of the six groups studied here. The Legión de Mayo, at least after the coup, also had members of lower social origins. In view of the prestigious backgrounds of legionario leaders, it is interesting to recall their more moderate political stance, compared to that of LNR, and their ties to Rosas's opposition. Out of all the nationalists, they and the LCA leaders seemed to have fared the best under liberal democracy.

When one compares the status of nationalists in general with that of liguistas, the former ranked higher. Considering the fact that, aside from the LCA and the post-1930 Legión, the nationalist organizations were small and selective, it would be more fitting to compare them with the Junta Central and Consejo Ejecutivo than with the Liga as a whole. Higher percentages of Liga leaders than nationalists belonged to the Jockey Club, prestigious military associations, and rural societies: 48 percent versus 28 percent, 8 percent versus 3 percent, and 31 percent versus 18 percent, respectively. About the same proportion of nationalists and prominent liguistas were listed in social registers — 53 percent versus 51

Table XIV
Previous Political Affiliations of Nationalists
(categories are not exclusive)

U.C.R.	Conservative Party or Local		P.D.P.	Anarchist	Socialist	National Party (Partido Nacional)		Total Persons
	L.N.R., Acción Republicana	Liga Republicana				Comité de la Juventud	National Party (Partido Nacional)	
Legión de Mayo	1	4	1	-	-	2	-	1
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo	1	2	1	-	-	-	3	7
LCA	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Combination	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	2
Total Affiliations	5	13	3	4	2	5	7	35

percent; a remarkable 86 percent of legionarios/republicanos, however, were included in such works. Sixty-one percent of the nationalists studied could be considered "aristocrats," in comparison to 70 percent of the Liga authorities. This aristocratic quotient would place the nationalists between Conservative and P.D.P. national deputies.²

There is another way of comparing the status of nationalists with that of Liga leaders. Earlier I defined an aristocrat as an individual with one or more of the qualifications noted in Table XIII. The only qualification possessed by 39 percent of nationalist aristocrats was their inclusion in social registers, in contrast to 12 percent of aristocratic Liga leaders. This suggests that a substantial number of nationalists did indeed come from once-prominent families who had little left but their names.³

As in the case of the Liga, little information was available on the previous party affiliations of nationalists (see Table XIV). Unlike liguistas, however, many were simply too young to have participated in politics for very long before the late 1920's. At least five were tied to the older forces of order --- through the Comité Nacional de la Juventud. Few nationalists or liguistas were elected or appointed to office at the national, provincial, or local levels under the Radicals (Table XV); again, in the former's case, this can partly be explained by youth. Still, it is significant that the shift from Yrigoyen to Uriburu was accompanied by a dramatic increase in the number of nationalists employed in government, a number which remained

Table XV
Elected or Appointed to Political Offices (categories not exclusive)

	Before 1945 ^b	Under Yrigoyen 1916-1932	Under Alvear 1922-1928	Under Urquiza 1930-1932	Under Concordia 1932-1943	Under Military Rule 1943-1945	Under Peronism 1945-1955	Since 1st Peron Govt. 1955-	Occupied Office at Unknown Date	Total Persons
I NR, Acción Republicana	-	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	1	6
O.S.R.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liga	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rep. Icónica	1	-	-	9	10	6	4	3	2	20
Leyton do- Mauro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
O.D.O.	3	2	3	8	9	6	2	1	2	22
Liga Republicana & Legion de Mayo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(28)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
H.G.A.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(36)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Combintrol	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(46)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Others	5	1	5	7	12	29	19	11	10	87

stable under the Concordancia, dropped somewhat under the military regime of 1943-1945, and fell under Peronism and succeeding governments. Other evidence supports the view that Uriburu restored not only nationalists but scions of régimen families in general to office. In his contemporary novel, Hombres en soledad (1935), Manual Gálvez described the thoughts and activities of the former political elite before and after September 1930; for many of its members, the revolution signified little more than an opportunity for jobs. Ironically, one of the ostensible reasons for the revolution had been to halt the costly expansion of the bureaucracy — that is, the admission of middle-class aspirants. Uriburu himself complained about proliferating demands for employment, but that did not prevent him from awarding posts to his own relatives, the Uriburus, Ibargurens, Tedins, and others.⁴

If the Uriburu government resembled a gobierno de familia, the nationalist organizations under consideration also represented groups of interrelated families (Table XVI). At least 36 percent of the nationalists studied were closely related to other nationalists, and the actual percentage was probably higher, considering the large number of possible relationships. The fact that only 8 percent of the liguistas studied were closely related to other liguistas reflects the larger and broader membership of the Liga as compared to nationalists groups. The possibility of links between the Liga and the nationalists was also explored; 14 percent of the nationalists were closely related

Table XVI
 Relationship of Nationalists to Land and Agricultural Production:
 Direct Access to Land (through ownership, managing of family
 estate, or agrabusiness)

No.	LNR, Acción República (18)	Liga República (135)	Legión de Mayo (155)	Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo (28)	LCA (34)	Combination (4)	Total (374)
-	35	55		12	13	1	116
%	-	26	35	43	38	25	31

to liguistas, and twelve of the nationalists studied had also belonged to the Liga. These kinship ties between liguistas and nationalists do not suffice to show that the groups represented two succeeding generations in anything other than a philosophical sense.

The ancestors of at least 26 percent of the nationalists had arrived in Argentina during the colonial period (see Table XVII), which corresponds closely to the figure of 24 percent for Liga authorities. I attempted to find out whether any ancestors had held political positions at any level (Table XVIII). The results of my search were limited, so limited in the case of the Liga that I did not discuss this topic in Chapter IV. In contrast to Gallo's and Sigal's figures of 34 percent of Radical and 55 percent of Conservative candidates for office,⁵ only 18 percent of the ancestors of Liga leaders held positions. The actual proportion must have been greater; still, the fact that I found a higher percentage for the forebears of nationalists — 31 percent, using the same sources — is suggestive.

Other data go along with this impression that the nationalists descended from more prestigious families than did liguistas, but that relatively little remained of the former's status. About 28 percent of the nationalists were listed in social registers and/or had ancestors who occupied political positions, but did not belong to the Jockey Club, a rural society, or a prestigious military club, in contrast to 10 percent of Liga leaders (Table XIX). Another way to compare the nationalists' status with that of their ancestors is to

Table XVII
Arrival in Argentina of Earliest Known Ancestor

LNR, Acción República (18)	Pre-1810					1810-1890					Total 1810-1890 No. %
	1701- 1776	Vice- Royalty	Exact Date Unknown	Total Colonial No. %	1810- 1830	1831- 1850	1851- 1870	1871- 1890			
Liga República (135)	4	2	9	22	37	27	4	2	2	10	7
Legión de Mayo (155)	5	9	9	18	41	26	3	1	1	-	5
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo (228)	2	2	-	6	10	36	1	1	-	-	2
LCA (34)	-	1	3	-	4	12	-	-	1	-	3
Combination (4)	-	-	-	1	1	25	-	-	-	-	-
Total (374)	11	15	21	49	96	26	8	4	4	2	18

Table XVIII
Had Ancestors Who Held Elective or Appointive Office

	Colonial Period	Since Independence	Both Periods	Total No.	Total %
LNR, Acción Republicana (18)	-	2	2	4	22
Liga Republicana (135)	16	17	8	41	30
Legión de Mayo (155)	16	19	13	48	31
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo (28)	1	5	9	15	54
LCA (34)	1	4	2	7	21
Combination (4)	1	-	-	1	25
Total (374)	35	47	34	116	31

Table XIX
Listed in Social Registers and/or Had Ancestors Who Held Offices,
but not in Jockey Club, Círculo de Armas, Centro Naval, Círculo Militar,
Sociedad Rural Argentina, or Other Rural Society*

No.	LNR, Acción Replicana (18)	Liga Replicana (135)	Legión de Mayo (155)	Liga Repùblica & Legión de Mayo (28)	LCA (34)	Combination (4)	Total (374)
5	43	35		15	6	1	105
%	28	32	23	54	18	25	28

*Liga Patriótica Argentina:
Junta Central, Consejo Ejecutivo: 7 (10%)
Brigade Delegates: 11 (8%)
Total: 18 (8%)

look at Tables XV and XVI. At some point in their lives, 19 percent of the nationalists were elected or appointed to office, and far fewer held office before they joined nationalist groups. In contrast, at least 31 percent of their forebears held office. Out of all the nationalists studied, those who belonged to both the Liga Republicana and the Legión de Mayo best fit the description of venidos a menos. Their declining status perhaps helps explain their double allegiance to the nationalist cause.

Another measure of social and economic prestige was landownership. One may note that roughly the same proportion of Liga leaders and nationalists — one-half — enjoyed some access to rural estates (Table XXIII). Whereas 39 percent of the Liga authorities owned or managed rural properties, and 48 percent had direct access to land and/or belonged to a rural society, however, the corresponding figures for nationalists were 31 percent and 35 percent, respectively (Tables XX and XXV). On the other hand, more nationalists than Liga leaders were related to landowning families but not directly involved in production — 21 percent versus 11 percent. Information on the size of landholdings was limited, but it is suggestive that more latifundistas were found in the Liga in general than in nationalist groups, 21 percent of the liguistas who owned or managed estates controlled latifundia, in comparison to 4 percent of the nationalists.

Both Liga members and nationalists were involved in a variety of careers (Table XXVI), but at least to the compilers of biographical

Table XX
Principal Occupations of Nationalists

	Liberals Professions (Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, Professor) No. * L.R.	Bureaucrat/ Liberal Professions No. * A.C.	Bureaucrat/ Politician Professions No. * R.P.	Writer, Journalist No. * R.J.	Military Officer No., % Legion M.A.	Banking, Finance, Utilities, Commerce Transport No., % Legion M.A.	Business (including employees)			Business Combination of Business Activities No., % Legion M.A.	Business Agriculture and Ranching No., % Legion M.A.
							No.	%	No.		
—	1	6	7	39	—	10	56	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	100%*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Liga	11	17	7	11	4	6	9	14	—	—	0%
Republican	(6.4)	(15)	(10)	(15)	(6.7)	(20)	(4)	(27)	—	2	3
Legion de M.A.	10	15	10	15	3	5	1	1	1	5	3
FLA	(6.5)	(14)	(13)	(15)	(6.7)	(36%)	(4)	(27)	—	—	1%
Frente Republicana	2	3	1	6	3	20	4	27	—	1	6
Legion de M.A.	(1.5)	(2.5)	(1)	(4)	(1)	(31%)	(—)	(—)	—	—	—
FLCA	6	25	1	4	1	4	—	—	7	30	—
(2.1)	(2.1)	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	(31%)	(—)	(—)	—	—	—
Capitalization	3	75	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	25	—
(4)	(4)	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	—	—	—
Total	33	127	26	15	11	6	24	13	8	4	6
(18.5)	(18.5)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(2.6)

*Because of rounding procedure, figures may not add up to 100%.

**In this table, numbers in parentheses represent total number of positive respondents.

Table XXI
Relationship of Nationalists to Land and
Agricultural Production: Size
of Property (in hectares)

LNR, Acción Republicana (18)	under 500	501- 1,000	1,001- 3,000	3,001- 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	over 10,000	Unknown	Total
Liga Republicana (135)	1	-	-	1	-	2	31	35
Legión de Mayo (155)	2	2	3	2	-	1	45	55
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo (28)	1	-	1	4	-	-	6	12
LCA (34)	-	-	1	-	-	2	10	13
Combination (4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (374)	4	2	5	7	-	5	93	116

Table XXII
 Relationship of Nationalists to Land and Agricultural Production:
 Indirect Access to Land (closely related to landowning family,
 but not directly involved in production)

	LNR, Acción Replicana (18)	Liga Replicana (135)	Legión de Mayo (155)	Liga Repùblica & Legión de Mayo (28)	LCA (34)	Combination (4)	Total (374)
No.	6	34	29	8	-	1	78
%	13	25	19	29	-	25	21

Table XXII
Relationship of Nationalists to Land and Agricultural Production:
Direct and Indirect Access to Landownership and Management*

No.	LNR, Acción Replicana (18)	Liga Replicana (135)	Legión de Mayo (155)	Liga Repùblica & Legión de Mayo (28)	LCA (34)	Combination (4)	Total (374)
%	13	51	54	71	38	50	52

*See Tables XX and XXI.

Table XXIV
Relationship of Nationalists to Land and Agricultural
Production: Direct, and Indirect or No Access to Land

	Jockey Club	Sociedad Rural Argentina, Rural Society	Both	Neither	Total
Direct Access to Land:					
LNR, Acción Republicana	-	-	-	-	0
Liga Republicana	4	11	5	15	35
Legión de Mayo	18	9	15	13	55
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo	3	2	3	4	12
LCA	4	2	5	2	13
Combination	1	-	-	-	1
Subtotal	30	24	28	34	116
Indirect or No Access to Land:					
LNR, Acción Republicana	3	-	-	15	18
Liga Republicana	13	2	3	82	100
Legión de Mayo	18	3	5	74	100
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo	1	-	1	14	16
LCA	2	-	1	18	21
Combination	1	-	-	2	3
Subtotal	38	5	10	205	258
Total	68	29	38	239	374

Table XXV
 Relationship of Nationalists to Land and Agricultural Production:
 Direct Access to Land and/or Membership in Sociedad Rural
 Argentina or Other Rural Societies

No.	LNR, Acción RepUBLICANA (18)	Liga RepUBLICANA (135)	Legión de Mayo (155)	Liga REPUBLICANA & Legión de Mayo (155)	LCA (34)	Combination (4)	Total (374)
-	40	63		13		14	1
%	-	30	41	46	41	25	35

Table XVI
Links Between Nationalists and Liquistas*

Ref	1 to Members of Groups (133)	No. of Persons Related to Members of Liga Patriótica Argentina (only close relationships)	
		No. of Possible Relationships**	%
L	50	37	40
República Mayo (155)	58	37	50
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo (28)	14	50	8
LCA (28)	9	27	7
Combination (34)	1	25	2
Total (374)	134	36	111
			54
			14

*Nationalists who also belonged to Liga Patriótica Argentina: 12 (3%)

Liquistas (in group studied) closely related to other Liquistas: 17 (8%)

Liquistas (in group studied) possibly related to other Liquistas: 6

**"Close relationships" include siblings, first and second cousins, father-son, grandfather-grandson, uncle-nephew, brothers-in-law.

***"Possible relationships", as indicated by the joint possession of a surname and other clues, cannot be verified at this stage of research.

dictionaries, the professional lives of the former were more distinguished than those of the latter; occupational data were found on 87 percent of Liga leaders and only 51 percent of the nationalists. Otherwise there were few striking differences between the occupational backgrounds of the two sets of right-wing groups, although somewhat more nationalists were found in the liberal professions and in rural activities than liguistas.⁶ Military officers played a greater role in the Liga, especially in its highest circles, than in all the nationalists groups but the LCA. Again, the similarities between the two organizations are noteworthy, although with its uniformed men marching in regimental formation, the LCA was more militarized than the Liga. Its brigade members were even classified according to their readiness for battle — combatants, replacements, and those in auxiliary service.⁷ Also, even if the government in 1919 quietly aided the Liga, it never extended its official recognition, as the Uriburu regime did to the LCA.

Of the nationalist groups under consideration, only the post-coup Legión de Mayo and the LCA attempted to recruit a mass following like the Liga's. More information is available on the mass base of the LCA than on that of the Legion. As of mid-1931, the LCA claimed to have brigades in the federal capital and the provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, Córdoba, Santa Fe, Corrientes, Mendoza, Salta, Santiago del Estero, San Juan, San Luis, Catamarca, and Jujuy and the territory of Formosa. There were student brigades at the primary

school and university levels and female brigades in the larger cities; according to Floro Lavalle, immigrant groups also wished to start their own.⁸ Although women members were supposed to come from all ranks of society, like their counterparts in the Liga, the most active ones were from the upper class. Indeed, many of them had been involved in the Collection and the Liga.⁹

Since all of the nationalists studied were active in the federal capital or its surroundings, there is no table equivalent to the one in Chapter IV on locations of Liga brigades. Instead, I tried to find out the birthplaces of nationalists and was able to gather information on only 28 percent of the persons surveyed (Table XXVII). Nevertheless, the trend is clear; an overwhelming majority was born in the capital. This does not appear to bear out the common belief that nationalists come from old but poor families of the impoverished interior. It is possible that the parents of many nationalist figures came from the interior provinces, but only a lengthy study of their family trees could prove or disprove this assertion.

An interesting contrast may be observed between the ages of Liga members and nationalists (Table XXVIII). The typical nationalist studied was much younger than the liguista; the average age of a nationalist in 1930 was thirty-three, compared to forty-seven for a Liga member in 1920. Age differences also existed between the nationalist groups. Members of the Liga Republicana and of both this militia and the Legión de Mayo, probably the most committed nationalists,

Table XXVII
Birthplace of Nationalists^a

Birthplace	LNR, Acción República (7)	Liga República (42)	Legión de Mayo (25)	Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo (16)	LCA (14)	Combination (2)	Total (106)
Federal Capital	4	28	15	10	7	1	65
Prov. of Buenos Aires	-	3	4	2	3	-	12
Prov. of Santa Fe	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Prov. of Córdoba	2	3	-	-	-	-	5
Prov. of Entre Ríos	-	3	1	-	-	1	5
Prov. of Turumán	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
Prov. of Santiago del Estero	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Prov. of Salta	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Prov. of San Juan	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Prov. of Catamarca	-	-	2	1	-	-	3
Prov. of San Luis	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
Europe	-	3	2	1	1	-	7

^aOnly places where at least one nationalist was born have been listed.

Table XXVIII
Ages of Nationalists in 1930

	20 & under			21-25			26-30			31-40			41-50			51 & over			Average Age	Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
<u>LNR, Acción Republicana (7)</u>	1	14	-	-	2	29	3	43	-	-	1	14	33	33	7	7	7	7		
Liga Republicana (40)	3	8	15	38	8	20	10	25	3	8	1	3	28	28	40	40	40	40		
Legión de Mayo (43)	2	5	9	21	9	21	10	23	11	26	2	5	34	34	43	43	43	43		
Liga Republicana & Legión de Mayo (16)	-	-	6	38	4	25	3	19	3	19	-	-	30	30	16	16	16	16		
LCA (17)	-	-	-	-	2	12	9	53	5	29	1	6	40	40	17	17	17	17		
Combination (3)	-	-	1	33	-	-	1	33	1	33	-	-	35	35	3	3	3	3		
Total (126)	6	5	31	25	25	20	36	29	23	18	5	4	33	33	126	126	126	126		

tended to be the youngest, and those who belonged to the LCA, the organization which most resembled the Liga Patriótica, the oldest. Like Nazis and Italian Fascists, nationalists were also younger than politicians of national importance, such as deputies and senators.¹⁰

In a previous discussion of age and ideology (see Chapter IV), I tied youth to counterrevolution. Did their age and other attributes characterize nationalists as counterrevolutionaries, or should they be classified as reactionaries or conservatives? Clearly they did not belong to the last category, as did the older, better-established liguistas. The latter saw little need for dramatic changes in the political and social system beyond limited economic reforms, in contrast to the nationalists' desire for corporatism, attacks on staid bourgeois thought and behavior, and stress on youth, virility, and action. A case can be made, however, for the nationalists as fitting either of the other two categories. Indeed, they used both terms when referring to themselves.¹¹ Before making this case, it would be useful to mention the most salient features of nationalists which have emerged from the tables and accompanying discussion. They tended to be young members of families which had been prominent in the past and at least had retained social prestige. About half owned land or were related to landholding families. Their degree of influence and power, although not insignificant, was not commensurate with their social standing; the fact that many were related to each other reinforced the feeling that they had been robbed of their collective birthright.

As Mayer has shown, counterrevolutionaries have usually come from defunctionalized segments of the major classes. In studying the ties between displaced groups and counterrevolution, social scientists have usually focused on the role of the lower middle class. This particular class, however, is not always the decisive counterrevolutionary element; a more important determinant is the extent to which members of various classes undergo or perceive a loss of status and opportunity for advancement.¹² Certain members of the Argentine political class in the late 1920's occupied an unstable position comparable to that of the petty bourgeoisie in other contexts. With the industrialization of Europe, the lower middle class was increasingly alienated from the means of production and the benefits of the new economic order. Its members resented the capitalists above them and especially the workers below them, fearing their absorption by the proletariat. The petty bourgeoisie was a class doomed by economic modernization; the nationalists belonged to a group threatened principally by political modernization, which in turn reflected currents of economic change in Argentina.

Some members of the former political elite had become alienated from the means of production — the land, and perhaps their interests had suffered as a result of the agrarian crises of the early postwar and Depression periods.¹³ More important, they had been displaced from the role of making decisions which dramatically affected the distribution of wealth and power in an economically dependent society.

They despised the groups below them: the workers, and particularly the immigrant middle class, whose upward mobility they begrudged. They identified their interests with those of the landed class, yet they also denigrated the latter's materialism and staleness. Eventually they came to view some of its members as a deleterious influence on the nation, as will be discussed below.

One characteristic of the nationalists, however, makes it difficult to consider them counterrevolutionaries: their unwillingness to form a popular base. Although European counterrevolutionary leaders such as Mussolini and Hitler were contemptuous of the masses and democracy, they nevertheless forged mass movements. Except for the LCA and post-1930 Legión de Mayo, the nationalist groups were consciously elitist in composition, attitude, and political behavior.

Elitism is more an attribute of reactionaries than of counter-revolutionaries. The nationalists also possessed other presumably reactionary traits; many of them were tied to the land and almost all of them tended to be militantly Catholic. In accordance with Mayer's definition of the term, they hoped for the reestablishment of a rigidly hierarchical society protected by such institutions as the Church, local communities (hence, their stress on federalism), landed estates, and corporatist groups. Unlike reactionaries, however, the nationalists desired change, praised activism and youth, and were not necessarily hostile to science and technological innovation.¹⁴ They embodied characteristics of both reactionaries and counterrevolutionaries and it is difficult to characterize them as one or the other.

To better understand the nature of these groups, one must turn to their ideas on social matters and compare them with those of the Liga.¹⁵ Their attitudes on Jews were markedly different. Previously Jews had been attacked for such alleged traits as an unwillingness to assimilate, unethical business practices, materialism, and radicalism. Even though their charges were false or exaggerated, these critics still saw Jews as human beings, members of a particular religious and ethnic group. The Jew envisioned by Maurras and by some nationalists, however, was not a real person but an embodiment of modern social forces which they hated and feared. The first type of anti-Semitism, consisting of stereotypical impressions and prejudices handed down through the ages, has been called "traditional anti-Semitism" by Gino Germani. He assigned the term "ideological anti-Semitism" to the second, more radical type, in which the Jew is seen as a demon figure. With the rise of ideological anti-Semitism in the late 1920's, the traditional variety did not die out; the two coexisted and gave each other sustenance.¹⁶

In order to understand the distinct character of ideological anti-Semitism, it would be useful to first examine traditional anti-Semitism. Typical expressions of this view can be found in Criterio (which contained statements of both types of anti-Semitism) and in the works of Manual Gálvez. As previously stated, two Jewish converts to Catholicism frequently wrote for Criterio. One of them, the novelist Julio Fingerit, explained his religious views in an article addressed

to "Jews of good faith." In it he asserted his pride in being Jewish, which signified belonging to a "race" descended from the original founders of the mosaic religion. One could give up one's religion but not one's race, he had discarded his original faith because "when one learns the Truth one becomes Catholic." Implicitly he was advising other Jews to do the same.¹⁷

Gálvez's views were similarly influenced by racialism and Catholicism.¹⁸ As a "true Catholic," he hoped that Jews would recognize their religious errors and convert, but he believed it was un-Christian to hate them or persecute them. He was not an anti-Semite, for such beliefs signified "incredible wickedness and stupidity." Furthermore, genuine anti-Semitism did not exist in Argentina, for it consisted of confining Jews to an inferior position within society, or of the desire to expel them from the country or exterminate them. Since Jews were freely admitted to all areas of the economy, society, government, and intellectual life (an exaggeration on Gálvez's part), anti-Semitism was merely a phantasma, a creation of unscrupulous journalists. True, the nationalists hated Jewish communists, but only for their ideology and not for their religion. He admitted that some ignorant people thought that all Jews in Argentina were Russian and therefore communists. Among the Jews, as among other ethnic groups, however, only the poor workers were revolutionary and the better-established ones were not.

Nonetheless Gálvez wished to restrict the entrance of foreigners, particularly Jews, in order to conserve the nation's "Latin spirit."

While Jewish intellectuals adapted themselves to the countries in which they settled, Jewish workers

who only deal with other Jews and because of lack of education, cannot comprehend our spirit, will continue being Jews.

Here, in spite of himself, Gálvez hinted that one could not be consciously Jewish and a true Argentine at the same time. He went on to warn of the potential danger of a large unassimilated Jewish minority. In a heavily populated country, the existence of such a group would pose no threat, in a nation of barely twelve million inhabitants, a group of one million Jews would harm the nationalist and the Latin spirit. Indeed, this moment was approaching; 800,000 Jews already resided in Argentina (the actual number was about 215,000 in 1932).¹⁹ From the Catholic viewpoint, the danger was even more severe, as Jews tended to fight for divorce, the separation of Church and State, and the suppression of monastic orders. Thus, continued Jewish immigration was not conducive to the health of a Latin, Catholic country. Gálvez assured the Jews who lived in Argentina that they had nothing to fear as long as they refrained from attacking the foundations of the Argentine nationality. Traditional anti-Semites such as Fingerit and Gálvez criticized the Jews on grounds of religion, separatism, leftism, and the supposed possession of peculiar "racial" characteristics. Ideological anti-Semites shared some of these concerns but manifested others as well.

The leaders of the Liga were not ideological anti-Semites. In fact, anti-Semitism in any form never found its way into Liga rhetoric, at least at the official level. Despite Liga criticism of foreigners and leftists and the brutality of vigilantes who later joined the Liga, references to Jews in Liga publications were extremely rare; only occasionally did catchwords such as "Russian subversives" appear. To the Liga, immigrants represented a danger only insofar as they were revolutionary. This does not mean that liguistas necessarily favored Jewish settlement in Argentina, the the "Jewish question" had little importance for them. Although Carlés and other Liga spokesmen criticized foreign enterprise, economic liberalism, and the excesses of capitalism, they did not identify them with Judaism. The reason that the organization's leaders did not disseminate anti-Semitism was that they were mostly well-to-do, secure, and influential. Radical anti-Semites usually have experienced a sense of powerlessness, a decline in status, and a loss of upward mobility²⁰ — as had many nationalists.

Also noteworthy is the fact that persons who later became nationalists were not conspicuously anti-Semitic in the early postwar period. After the Semana Trágica, the editors of the Jewish monthly, Vida Nuestra, asked a number of intellectual and political leaders for their opinions of the treatment of Jews during that week and the position of Jews in general. Leopoldo Lugones, Carlos Ibarguren (Sr.), Juan P. Ramos, and Justo Pallarés Acebal, an anarchist who later turned

republicano and wrote for La Fronda, were four of the respondents. Ibarguren tersely replied that the Jewish community could not be blamed for the events surrounding the general strike, although some Jews had participated in them. He condemned the vigilante actions against innocent persons, Jews and non-Jews. In his opinion,

. . . Jewish immigration, laborious and honest, is useful for the country and contributes efficiently to the development of national life.²¹

Ramos's answer was favorable toward the Jews, but in a somewhat more equivocal manner. He hesitated to discuss the Semana Trágica, about which he knew little, but he did express his admiration for the idealism, courage, and tenacity of the Jewish "race" in its long struggle against persecution, as well as for its contributions to civilization. Whether Jewish immigration suited the country was another matter. If the Jews preserved their faith yet truly incorporated themselves into the nation, it did, otherwise not.²² Pallarés Acebal was less hesitant in expressing his views. In his opinion, the police were responsible for the violence of the Semana Trágica, not the Jews. The Jews lacked the necessary guarantees of safety from the authorities because (1) as foreigners, they did not constitute a potential source of Radical votes, (2) the government had encouraged the white guards, and (3) the traditionally anti-Semitic clergy interfered in government. The white guards, whose actions were unjustified by any definition of patriotism, had selected

the Jews as victims under government persuasion. Finally, not only was Jewish immigration beneficial to Argentina, but Jewish emigration would obstruct national progress.²³

Lugones delivered the most eloquent defense of the Jews. He denounced the "artificial anti-Semitism, fomented here by foreign friars, infesting the soul of our governing class." Persecution of the Jews was a means of expressing fear of revolution. The perpetrators of violence claimed to be defending Argentinism against the Russians, although the list of contributors to the Comisión Pro-Defense del Orden included many foreign names. Argentinism was not limited to Argentines, evidently; most of the contributors belonged to the foreign banking and commercial community. On the other hand, the casualty lists of workers indicated that the majority were not Russian but Spanish and Italian in background, like most porteños. They formed the true core of "Argentinism."

The Constitution was based not on "Argentine principles" but on the internationalist doctrine of the rights of man, and it guaranteed the freedom of all persons who wished to live in Argentina. Like all immigrant groups, the Jews had a right to expect Argentine hospitality, and perhaps had more right than most, because of their diligence, integrity, and intellectual talents. Furthermore, they assimilated well and were proud to see their children born on Argentine soil.²⁴

It is interesting to note these authors' later views; works of Ibarguren and Lugones are available for comparison. Decades later

Ibarguren claimed that the Semana Trágica was "undoubtedly fomented by Russian agitators, revolutionary agents of the Soviet" and identified Marxism and communism with Judaism.²⁵ Typically, Lugones exhibited the more striking change of opinion. After his turn to the far right, Lugones contradicted his earlier remarks on the national origins of radical workers and claimed that leftism in Argentina mostly attracted the foreigners. Despite their continual criticism of the nation and their subversive activities, the situation of the foreign-born was better than that of native citizens, owing to the fact that the Constitution was "the ideological poem of foreignism."²⁶

Lugones believed that a new era was dawning: that of "national reconcentration," in which farmers, soldiers, and artists, the "most genuine elements" of each country, would become the leaders of society. The preceding historical epoch had been characterized by the reign of commerce and of its archtypical figures — the banker and the parliamentarian. The incarnation of these figures was the Jew, a born merchant alienated from agrarian life, an internationalist lacking a fatherland:

. . . systemizer and tenacious; astute and skeptical; intellectual and twister of words; adaptable and absorbent . . . international finance constitutes a Hebrew organization, an international socialism a genuine Jewish sect.

Hastening to add that he was not anti-Semitic, Lugones claimed that his observation was a purely objective one.²⁷ Indeed, he did not hate Jews but concepts and forces which he labeled Jewish.

Similar observations were found in LNR after 1929. In the first period of its publication, from December 1927 to early 1929, however, manifestations of anti-Jewish sentiments tended to be brief and scattered. An anonymous author noted, for example, that the Jews were not the best immigrants for any country, much less Argentina, where populators of the desert were needed. He cited approvingly the efforts of other countries to limit the entry of Jews and restrict their commercial activities.²⁸ Observing that a prominent literary magazine had been "taken over" by Jews and "Jewish ideas," an LNR writer noted that Jews, "people from the outside, people who belonged nowhere," exhibited a "dishonest facility" for "taking advantage of everything."³⁰

When Enrique Dickmann married in a synagogue, without any protest from fellow Socialists, Abel Galíndez reminded LNR readers that the party had reproved Antonio de Tomaso for his church wedding. Internationalist and freethinking Jews were motivated by hatred of other religions and nations. "They are profoundly Jewish and always will be," and their identity as such would even take precedence over their allegiance to socialism and liberalism.³¹

Even before 1930, however, the periodical was beginning to attach importance to supposed Jewish influence in the economy and in government. In 1928 Carulla only half-jokingly predicted that by 1932 a Jewish Radical politician, Leopoldo Bard, would be minister of foreign relations and would have attracted 500,000 "circumcised immigrants" to

Argentina. The Jews would become so powerful that the government would contemplate adding a five-pointed star to national symbols. Agriculture and the economy in general would be suffering in four-years time, but commerce — particularly that which rested in Jewish hands — would be flourishing.³¹

La Nueva República believed that the leading grain exporters — Bunge and Born, Hirsch, Dreyfus — were Jews, and once the Depression began, references to the "Jewish intermediaries" appeared more frequently. An unknown editorialist observed that Argentina provided the world with grain to the detriment of its own farmers and the enrichment of "a half-dozen Jews." In reality, most of these merchants had converted to Catholicism long ago and had married into Argentine aristocratic families for generations.³³ This made little difference to the newspaper writers, partly because they, like Fingerit, considered it impossible for even converted Jews to shed their identity, since they could not give up their "race." The other reason was that by 1930, in their vocabulary the word "Jew" no longer signified a member of an ethnic group or practitioner of a certain religion. Instead it represented disparate and antithetical forces which the nationalists found threatening: leftism, finance and international capital, liberalism, Masonry, urbanism, materialism, decadence, atheism.

Augusto Gozalbo attempted to expose the "Hebrew origin" of socialism, internationalism, and anti-Catholicism.³⁴ The simple fact that Marx was Jewish indicated the nature of socialism. Although his

parents had converted to Christianity, Marx "could not stop being a Jew." His family had even converted in Jewish fashion:

An so Jewish was his origin that the father, as a good Jewish lawyer, decided on converting the whole family in block, thus realizing an appreciable economy.

Marx's tendency to attack other Jews served as a further indication of his Jewishness; his anti-Semitism was that of a self-seeking Jew who wishes to conceal his background. He manifested another "typical" Jewish trait by ingratiating himself with prominent scholars, thus assuring his future. Revealingly, Gozalbo claimed that he and his friends had spurned contacts with "professional intellectuals" and had removed themselves intentionally from official favor; he was writing, however, during Yrigoyen's administration, so it was unlikely that this isolation was intentional.

As a student Marx burned with impatience to learn everything, with that

racial megalomania that converts them [Jews] into monopolizers of knowledge or cereals or used clothing and furniture.

He was not a true scholar, however, but an "empresario of knowledge." He stored the ideas of others and incorporated them into socialism, with the assistance of Engels, whose intelligence he used for his own ends. Gozalbo thus contradicted himself by showing that socialism was not Marx's invention.

Socialism owed its international nature to the rootlessness of Jews, who for centuries had taken advantage of the "privileged circumstance of being foreigners in every country." Gozalbo did not show how this constituted an advantage, yet he thought it explained Jewish hatred for all nations, a hatred which had transformed itself into the antipatriotic internationalism of the socialists. Similarly, Jewish hatred for Catholicism lay underneath the socialists' anticlericalism and atheism.

Jewish internationalism and infiltration into socialism served as that "race's" tools for world domination. In order to increase the wealth and power of Israel, Jewish bankers had internationalized finance, and members of the Zwi Migdal had internationalized the white slave trade.³⁵ The latest evidence of Jewish inroads into leftism (it was puzzling that they would need to penetrate a movement which was already Jewish) was the marriage of Jewish women to Socialist leaders.

Some of these charges pertained to an age-old litany of complaints against Jews. What distinguished this expression of anti-Semitism from previous ones was the irrational and conspiratorial nature of the synthesis. Gozalbo's linkage of Judaism, international finance, prostitution, and socialism had no Argentine precedents, except for Martel. Martel, however, had touched only briefly on the socialist aspect because labor was just beginning to organize itself.³⁶ This multifaceted international threat received much attention in LNR.

Subsequent discussions treated the connections between socialism and capitalism — the two heads of a single movement designed to enslave the people —³⁷ and between Masonry and the Jews. The second subject arose on the occasion of the Spanish cabinet's decision to permit the immigration of Sephardic Jews. According to LNR, Spain suffered from the vengeance of the Jews who had been expelled in 1492. Since then the Jews had vented their wrath through their tools, the Spanish Masons, and this decision reflected the fact that Masons constituted a majority of the cabinet. The Masons' actions proved that "one can be Christian and work with Jewish spirit."³⁸ Here it is evident that the term "Jewish" had taken on a meaning entirely separate from that of religious or ethnic identity.

"The enemy" was depicted in detail in another article.³⁹

Nineteenth-century liberalism had created the proper conditions for the development of capitalism, which as the motor behind the world economy had imparted a sense of utilitarianism and materialism to all aspects of human life. These ruling philosophies, along with the political system of democracy and the ideal of social equality, had formed an environment dominated by money. In this environment certain groups had flourished, such as the Puritans and especially the Jews; in fact, Jewish international capitalism now ruled over the entire world. One of its agents for control was public and private credit; governments had mortgaged the future of their nations for the exclusive benefit of this international power. In pursuit of their own interests

or under outside pressure, the press, the political parties, and the government had united to maintain the established materialistic order. To preserve the status quo, the conservatives and the bourgeois parasites of capitalism had given part of their wealth to the people. Despite this behavior, they were accused of being responsible for capitalism and had lost influence. Meanwhile international capitalism had struck a bargain with socialism; the latter would support internationalism, free trade, and democracy and oppose truly radical, nationalistic innovations, and capitalism would create the petit bourgeoisie, a socialist constituency.

Two forces had arisen to fight Jewish capitalism — communism and fascism. Communism, which this author apparently did not identify with Judaism, he claimed had erred by attacking money as a means of exchange. Instead, the capitalist view of money as an end in itself was evil. The true solution was to create a national capitalism and a national system of credit completely independent of the Jewish. This was the fascist program. This writer himself erred in believing that the communists concentrated their attack on money. The left opposed the whole system of capitalism, while the fascists and LNR opposed only a small portion of it — finance and international capital.

The nationalists' views on Judaism have been described at length because they were indicative of their opinions on other matters. Although ideological anti-Semitism was not the most important feature of their doctrine, it was an integral one. The Jews were alternately

viewed as part of or synonymous with their greatest concern — the international threat against the nation and against the landowners, with whom the nationalists identified. In contrast, the conservative liguistas were not ideological anti-Semites because they did not perceive such a threat. The positions of the various groups on the Jewish question thus serve to differentiate their wider ideologies.

The issue of ideological anti-Semitism intersected other matters which preoccupied the nationalists: economic dependency, the state of the agrarian economy and agrarian producers, and the nation's leadership. A theme of *Liga* thought and of early nationalism, Argentine economic dependence became the overriding concern of Lugones and LNR writers after the onset of the Depression and particularly after the September coup. This subject was explored by Acción Republicana, a short-lived group formed in 1931 by Lugones, the Irazustas, Palacio, Pallarés Acebal, César Pico, Lassaga, and others. The authors of its program noted that foreign interests set the prices and the shipping rates of Argentine produce, and foreign banks also exploited Argentines. Instead of worrying about these problems, political parties were exclusively interested in forcing Uriburu to hold elections; indeed,

the politicians who want to return to normality,
without any reforms, are those responsible for and
the accomplices of all this.⁴⁰

As an agricultural country, Argentina would be better off if rural landowners and laborers ruled, unlike before the coup, when the

Chamber consisted of ninety-five lawyers and doctors and forty-one other urban professionals, one worker — a foreign agitator — only nine haciendados and one farmer, and unfortunately no peons.⁴¹

Uriburu's planned constitutional changes would remedy matters somewhat but were insufficient. A variety of measures was needed to insure national welfare, particularly in the agrarian sector. The government should supervise the meatpacking plants' pricesetting operations, stimulate rural cooperatives which would establish grain elevators and frigoríficos, and try to find markets for Argentine products in neighboring countries. It should also help set grain prices, shipping charges, rates of exchange, and land rents and further aid farmers by providing easy access to credit. Acción Republicana also aimed at protecting industries, particularly those based on national raw materials, nationalizing electric power, limiting the public debt, organizing labor unions as economic units untied to politics, and establishing an economic union between the Platine countries.⁴²

The nationalists still retained some aspects of economic liberalism in their programs, especially in their views on state intervention. While they opposed the concept of the state as mere watchdog, Lugones and LNR thought that government was a poor administrator. The periodical opposed the nationalization of oil for this reason, but did not exclude the possibility of a mixed public-private enterprise and approved of constant state vigilance over the activities of foreign capital.⁴³ Laissez-faire liberalism also influenced the nationalists'

view of the masses and the labor movement. Julio Irazusta, for example, characterized the eight-hour day and the minimum wage as unnecessary limits on production and on the size of the labor force, respectively. Lugones criticized labor unions on the grounds that they supported these measures.⁴⁴

In general, Lugones and LNR supported the trickle-down theory of wealth; workers would profit more from government stimulation of production than from "demagogic" prolabor policies, such as those of Yrigoyen. Nationalists did not coincide in their views on workers, however, nor were their ideas well developed on this topic. Gálvez and LCA spokesmen paid more attention to the social question than did LNR writers, and the former's attitudes were more paternalistic. On another occasion Julio Irazusta praised Mussolini's labor policies, including the labor courts, inexpensive housing, worker organization, and, in apparent contradiction with his other statement, the eight-hour day.⁴⁵ Nationalists also disagreed on conceptions of class. The LCA divided society into capitalists, laborers, and technicians (including professionals, intellectuals, and managers), and Rodolfo Irazusta divided it into producers and administrators, as will be discussed below.⁴⁶ In general, however, nationalists did not devote as much attention to the proletariat as did the Liga. Workers were less militant in the late twenties and early thirties than in the Liga's heyday. In addition, nationalists believed that socialism was the natural consequence of liberalism, which was their main target. If they succeeded in eradicating the latter, the former would also die out.

The nationalists wanted Argentina to consolidate its internal market and industrialize in order to insure the wellbeing of its inhabitants, the strength of its defenses, and its liberation from colonial status. On the need for establishing basic industries, creating infrastructure, and erecting tariff walls, Lugones was the most outspoken.⁴⁷ Under the combined influences of Lugones and other nationalists and of foreign exchange shortages accompanying the Depression, the Uriburu government reversed the precedent of relative free trade and encouraged the growth of industry. It imposed a 10 percent surcharge on the tariff and additional duties on some commodities, created an Exchange Control Commission to set priorities on imports and the use of hard currency, studied such matters as economic diversification and the establishment of new industries, and initiated road building and other massive public works programs.⁴⁸

The nationalists had reason to be pleased with such measures, but the staff of LNR was more concerned with agriculture and rural producers than with industrialization. Throughout the history of LNR, relatively little space was devoted to the urban economy compared to the rural. Its concern over the fate of the landed interests was tied to its views on class and society. Rodolfo Irazusta articulated these ideas in a series of editorials.⁴⁹ Like Lugones he denigrated the "civilization of commerce" which he saw as tied to cities, foreigners, the administrative class of merchants, professionals, financiers, and bureaucrats, and to democracy. Democracy represented

the domination of the administrators over the producers, of persons who produced nothing over those who created the nation's wealth — industrialists, landowners, rural and urban workers. In their haste to reap profits from financial dealings and from the "political industry," parasitic administrators neglected or actively harmed the rural industries which formed the backbone of the nation's economy. High taxes levied on landowners were one example of government disfavor; others were the lack of credit and infrastructure and the fact that governments had done nothing to lower railroad freight charges or obtain better prices from foreign exporters.

Perhaps the main contributing factor to the Irazustas' growing economic consciousness was the plight of the meatpacking plant in their home town of Gualeguaychú. Uriburu was indifferent to the financial problems of the frigorífico, one of the few owned and operated by Argentines — including an uncle of the Irazustas.⁵⁰ This convinced the Irazustas of government (be it Radical, uriburista, or Concordancia) disinterest in and even hostility to national capital, before the Roca-Runciman treaty of 1933, usually seen as the catalyst of nationalist anti-imperialism. In this treaty Great Britain guaranteed Argentina a fixed but smaller share of its chilled beef imports than it had previously enjoyed and eliminated tariffs on grain imports. In return, Argentina gave concessions in tariff policy in favor of British manufactures. The treaty only confirmed in their minds conclusions which the Irazustas had already reached on the reasons

for Argentine economic and political subservience. These reasons would be explained in their book La Argentina y el imperialismo británico (1933).

This book was only a more coherent presentation, supported with historical evidence, of ideas they had previously stated. The Irazusta brothers had already tackled the question of why governments supposedly representing the estancieros had actually hurt their interests and the nation's. To them it was clear that the administrators who ruled the country were not tied to the landowners or to the nation but to foreign interests. Those administrators who owned land had acquired it as a result of political or professional influence, or they had ruined themselves by spending all the income from their property to obtain their political positions. Those who did not fall into these categories were lackeys, content with the bribes the foreign capitalists gave them. In any case, they could not be considered representatives of the landowners.⁵¹ The Irazustas called these administrators by several names: the professional, conservative, or liberal "oligarchy" or, borrowing the Radicals' old term, el régimen.⁵²

This oligarchy, according to Fausto de Tazanos Pinto, had willfully erected obstacles to industrialization and had given foreign speculators unlimited credit from national banks to buy Argentine crops at low prices and make huge profits, while Argentine proprietors, tenants, and peons suffered. It had done this at the behest of its foreign employers (presumably British and Jewish) under a liberal constitution

which gave more rights to non-Argentines than to native sons. The Constitution had also stimulated immigration, resulting in the entrance of numerous undesirables. Thus liberal democracy meant "renunciation, social dissolution, and total delivery to the foreigner." Liberalism, like the oligarchy, was a tool of foreign domination.⁵³

The Irazustas and fellow LNR writers had formulated their own conception of class and their own explanation of Argentine problems, in vivid contrast to the Liga's "Argentine alternative" to revolution or, of course, to Marxist doctrine. The Liga had criticized liberalism and foreign capital but had primarily blamed leftist workers for economic and political difficulties. The Irazustas and their followers believed that an entire system was at fault: not the system of property relations tied to a world capitalist framework, but the ties themselves, the nexus of foreign domination. They divided Argentines into two groups: not the capitalists and the proletariat, but all those who worked for foreign interests, from leftist workers to lawyers employed by foreign companies to liberal ideologues, and those who worked for the nation. The nationalists went beyond mere criticism of liberalism; they considered it the principal cause of Argentine economic and political retardation. Furthermore, its adherents were not simply wrong or misguided, but traitors who had sold out to Argentina's enemies. An international conspiracy against the nation was afoot and only the strongest countermeasures could arrest it: the complete overhaul of the political system, the expulsion

of all entreguistas from positions of influence, and an end to economic imperialism. Although not genuinely anticapitalist, these measures were certainly radical; if carried out, they would have completely altered the status quo. Where the left is weak, as in Argentina in the 1920's and early 1930's, the extreme right wing can be the most innovative and energetic force in society.⁵⁴ This may have been true for the nationalists, whether they were reactionary or counterrevolutionary.

Notes

1

To compile the list of nationalists, I picked the names of all of the members of these groups which I found in the following primary accounts: Carulla, Al filo; F. Ibarguren, Orígenes; C. Ibarguren, Laferrère; Ibarguren, La historia; Quesada, Orígenes de la revolución; Manual de Lezica, Recuerdos de un nacionalista (Buenos Aires, 1968). The sources for the biographical information are listed in the biographical section of the bibliography. Unless otherwise stated, the data given on the Liga comes from Chapter IV. None out of the republicanos (in the second category) also wrote for LNR or belonged to Acción Republicana. Since the Legión and LCA were large organizations, its members who were studied were leaders or hard-core members.

2

Smith, Argentina and the Failure of Democracy, p. 31.

3

For this assertion (but no proof) see Arturo Jauretche, Interview, Oral History Project, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Apr. 1, 1971.

4

Uriburu, La palabra, p. 35. See the numerous requests for jobs in Uriburu, Letters, Notebooks I-IV. For a contemporary's accusation of nepotism and favoritism, see Boffi, Juventud, pp. 299 and 311.

5

Gallo and Sigal, "La formación," p. 166.

6

If one compares the professions of nationalists with those of top Nazis and Italian Fascists, one finds that the latter also tended to be engaged in the liberal professions and journalism, but rarely owned land. See Linz, "Some Notes," pp. 53-54. Sixty percent of national and regional leaders of the Brazilian fascists, the integralistas, were professionals, journalists, students, and professors, but again only a small percentage owned land. See Hélio Trindade, Integralismo: o fascismo brasileiro na década de 30 (São Paulo, 1974), pp. 140-145.

7

La Fronda, June 18, 1931.

8

Il Mattino D'Italia, n.d. (between May and June 1931), File 37727,
Archivo de La Prensa.

9

For a sample list of names, see La Fronda, June 12, 1931.

10

On the youth of Fascists and Nazis, see Linz, "Some Notes," p. 45; on Argentine politicians, see Cantón, El parlamento argentino, p. 47.

11

La Nueva Republica's use of the term "counterrevolution" was noted in Chapter V. "Reactionary" is used in LNR, 42 (Nov. 24, 1928) and 49 (June 14, 1930). Lugones referred to himself as a reactionary in El estado equitativo (ensayo sobre la realidad argentina) (Buenos Aires, 1932), p. 12.

12

Mayer, Dynamics of Counterrevolution, p. 41. One can also compare the nationalists to U.S. Progressives. Richard Hofstadter argued in The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York, 1955) that the Progressives were motivated by status anxiety. George E. Mowry also saw the Progressives as a movement composed of a group which aimed at reasserting its declining position of leadership. See The California Progressives (Berkeley, 1951).

13

Unfortunately I could not find enough information to test the latter possibility; however, it was certainly true for the Irazustas.

14

Mayer, Dynamics of Counterrevolution, pp. 48-49.

15

In studying the nationalists' views, I have relied heavily on LNR and on Lugones. With the exception of the LCA and Acción Republicana, the nationalist groups issued few statements of their beliefs. I do not discuss here the treatment of such topics as universal education, university reform, bureaucracy, morality, and foreign affairs in LNR. While these subjects do have a social content, I preferred to study other questions which have received less attention from Argentinists.

16

Gino Germani, "Antisemitismo ideológico y antisemitismo tradicional" Comentario, 34 (1962), pp. 55-63. Germani described the ideological anti-Semite in terms of authoritarianism, ethnocentrism,

general frustration, and hostility. A fuller explanation of the beliefs of the ideological anti-Semite, albeit in a different historical context, can be found in Peter G. J. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria (New York, 1964). As one can guess from the title, Pulzer uses the term "political anti-Semitism," rather than ideological anti-Semitism.

17

Criterio, 67 (June 13, 1929), p. 213.

18

Criterio, 239 (Sept. 29, 1932), pp. 300-302. Gálvez also denied being anti-Semitic in Entre la novela, p. 65.

19

Rosenwaike, "Jewish Population," p. 211.

20

See the excellent discussion of anti-Semitism in George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination (4th ed.; New York, 1972), pp. 253-287, especially the section on status envy and insecurity, pp. 284-287.

21

"Encuesta de Vida Nuestra sobre la situación de los judíos en la Argentina," Vida Nuestra, 7 (Jan., 1919), p. 173.

22

Ibid, pp. 177-178.

23

Ibid, pp. 183-185.

24

Ibid, pp. 145-148.

25

The quote appeared in Ibarguren, La historia, p. 324. Also see Carlos Ibarguren, La crisis política del mundo (Buenos Aires, 1933), pp. 35 and 38.

26

Lugones, El estado, pp. 11 and 55.

27

Ibid, p. 31.

28

LNR, 8 (Mar. 15, 1928).

29

LNR, 7 (Mar. 1, 1928).

30

LNR, 43 (Dec. 1, 1928).

31

LNR, 13 (May 5, 1928).

32

LNR, 16 (May 26, 1928).

33

LNR, 93 (Oct. 12, 1931). Other references to Jewish exporters are found in the following issues: 40 (Nov. 10, 1928), and 100 (Oct. 20, 1931). Ysabel F. Rennie discusses these grain merchants in The Argentina Republic (New York, 1945), pp. 330-333.

34

LNR, 60 (Aug. 30, 1939).

35

The Zwi Migdal was a mutual-aid society composed of Jews who "imported" young women and set them up in prostitution houses. Some nationalists seemed to believe that all persons who profited from this business were Jews, but this was certainly not the case. See Lewin, La colectividad, pp. 150-154.

36

One of the characters in La Bolsa stated that a Jewish victory over the world would be assured if the Jews exploited socialism for their purposes. See Martel, La Bolsa, p. 125.

37

LNR, 88 (Oct. 6, 1931).

38

LNR, 92 (Oct. 10, 1931).

39

Ibid.

40

Acción Republicana, Preámbulo y programa (Buenos Aires, 1931), p. 7. The following discussion is based entirely on this fifteen-page pamphlet.

41

Ibid, p. 6.

42

Ibid, pp. 9-13. Measures to improve government, public health, the judicial system, and the military were also proposed.

43

LNR, 46 (Dec. 22, 1928).

44

Irazusta's opinions are expressed in LNR, 20 (June 23, 1928), and Lugones's in La grande Argentina (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1962), pp. 88-89.

45

Gálvez's views appeared in LNR, 20 (June 23, 1928), and Irazusta's in LNR, 13 (May 5, 1928). On the LCA, see Guillermo Gallardo, "Programa de la L.C.A.," Bandera Argentina, Aug. 26, 1932. I am grateful to Carlos Mayo for this article.

46

Guillermo Gallardo, "Programa de la L.C.A., No. 4," n.p., n.d. (Photocopy.) I thank Carlos Mayo for this document. Also see LNR, 85 (Mar. 7, 1931).

47

See, for example, Lugones, La grande Argentina, pp. 134-137.

48

On Uriburu's economic policy see La Nación, Feb. 26, 1931; República Argentina, Mensaje del Presidente Provisional de la Nación, Teniente General José F. Uriburu, al Pueblo de la República, La obra de gobierno y de administración del 6 de septiembre de 1930 al 6 de septiembre de 1931 (Buenos Aires, 1931), pp. 40-52; Goldwert, Democracy, Militarism and Nationalism, pp. 36-37; Alejandro E. Bunge, "La República Argentina define su política económica nacional," Revista de Económica Argentina, 163 (1932), pp. 3-4.

49

See the following issues of LNR: 3 (Jan. 1, 1928), 52 (July 5, 1930), 57 (Aug. 9, 1930), 85 (Mar. 7, 1931).

50

Irazusta, Memorias, pp. 205-207, 219-220.

51

Julio Irazusta, "La oligarquía conservadora y los estancieros," in El pensamiento, II, ed. by Irazusta, pp. 166-168. This selection, written in 1931, was originally intended for publication in LNR.

52

These terms are found in LNR, 67 (Oct. 25, 1930), 73 (Dec. 6, 1930), 109 (Oct. 30, 1931).

53

LNR, 74 (Dec. 13, 1930), and 75 (Dec. 20, 1930). Also see Rodolfo Irazusta's statements in LNR, 70 (Nov. 15, 1930).

54

Eugen Weber made a similar point with reference to Europe in "The Right," p. 11.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

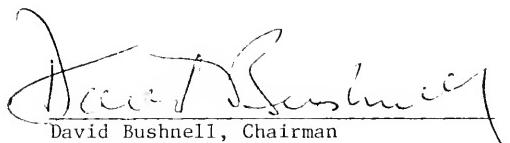
Sandra F. McGee was born on October 18, 1950, in Chicago Heights, Illinois. She attended public school in Chicago, Illinois, and Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, where she graduated with a B.A. degree in history, Summa Cum Laude, in April 1972. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Sigma Iota, a national honorary society for the Romance languages, Ms. McGee also received an award from Beloit in recognition of her performance in history.

Ms. McGee's interest in Latin America was kindled by a trip to Chile and Peru in 1959-60, and was broadened during a visit to Costa Rica in 1970-71. Following graduation from Beloit, she began graduate work in Latin America area studies at the University of Florida in September 1972. Her M.A. thesis was entitled "The Jews of Argentina: A Minority Group in a Splintered Society," and she received the degree in December 1973.

After reading and thinking about anti-Semitism, Ms. McGee became interested in the subject of the right wing. Graduate Council (1972-73) and N.D.F.L. Title VI (1974-76) fellowships gave her financial support as she prepared for her doctoral qualifying exams and planned her dissertation. After passing her exams with honors in August 1976, she accompanied her husband to Germany, and then set off to do her research in Argentina. Ms. McGee spent a year in Argentina, supported

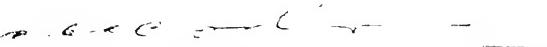
by a Fulbright-Hays dissertation grant, gathering information for her study. After one semester of teaching at Indiana University (Winter 1979) and another European sojourn, she completed her dissertation. She expects to receive the doctorate in history in December 1979 — the same time as her husband, Jim, who is completing a dissertation on the political police in Bavaria during the Weimar years.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



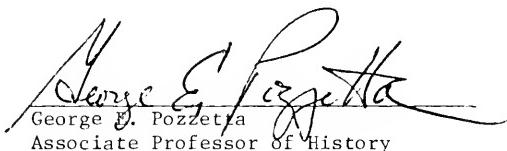
David Bushnell,
Chairman
Professor of History

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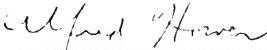
Cornelis Ch. Goslinga
Professor of History

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George E. Pozzetta
Associate Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Alfred Howler
Professor of Portuguese and
Latin American Studies

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Harry W. Paul
Professor of History

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 1979

Dean, Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



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